

## BERNARDO TASSO.

BERNARDO TASSO, whose fame has been overshadowed by that of his son, the author of the *Jerusalem Delivered*, was himself a poet of no little celebrity in his day, and his lyrics, if not his other productions, are still read and greatly admired. He belonged to a noble but decayed family that sprang, some say, from the ancient lords of Milan, dethroned by the Visconti. However this may be, he certainly descended from Amadeo Tasso, who, in the thirteenth century, owned the castle of Cornello, on a rocky height sometimes called the *Montagna del Tasso*, between Bergamo and Lake Como. He was the first to organize a regular post, in consequence of which his descendants added a courier's horn to the badger that already figured on their escutcheon by way of *armes parlantes*—the name of Tasso being synonymous with badger, and said to have been derived from the fondness of some remote ancestor for hunting that animal.\* And post-horses all over Europe long wore a badger's skin as an ensign on their heads. The Tassi became the general administrators of the post, not only in most of the Italian states, but in Spain, Germany, and the Netherlands, where they distinguished themselves in various walks of life and became founders of titled families. From the one who settled in Germany sprang the princely house of Thurn and Taxis—so called from Taxus, the Latin of Tasso. Another in Spain became the Count

of Villa Mediana. Philip Tasso was archbishop of Granada in the sixteenth century. Pedro Tasso was a Spanish general, and took part in the wars in Flanders. Simone Tasso distinguished himself at the battle of Lepanto, as well as at Tunis and Gembloux. A Tasso was sent to England as the ambassador of Philip II. Others were knights of St. John of Jerusalem, commanders of the order of St. Jago, etc. Roger Tasso was a noted chancellor of the University of Louvain. John Baptist Tasso was a lieutenant-general in Friesland, and killed at the siege of Bonn in 1558.\*

The chief branch of the family, however, remained at the old manor-house in Bergamo, and its members not only held the principal offices in that town, but were covered with honors by popes and emperors, particularly Pope Paul III. and the Emperor Charles V. And they had their name inscribed by the proud Venetian senate in the *Libro d'Oro*, or roll of the Venetian nobility. Bernardo Tasso belonged to this branch. He was born at Bergamo in 1493, and left an orphan in his childhood. One of his sisters became a nun in the Benedictine convent of Santa Grata at Bergamo, under the name of Donna Afra. However honored the family might be, there seems to have been but little wealth for the younger members. Bernardo's chief inheritance was his intelligence and fervid imagination. He was taken charge of by his uncle, Luigi Tasso,

\* It also signifies a yew-tree, to which Tasso makes allusion in his poems as if he preferred this signification.

\* M. de la Gournerie, on whom we draw freely in this article.

Bishop of Recanati, who sent him to school. One of his early instructors was Battista Pio, the celebrated philologist. He made great progress in Greek and Roman literature, and everything looked favorable as to his future career, when one night the good bishop was murdered by brigands, who carried off all he possessed, and Bernardo had to find other means of support. His poetic genius early displayed itself, especially in celebrating the charms of the beautiful Ginevra Malatesta, and when she married he bewailed his misfortune, says Guinguené, in "a sonnet so tender that there was not a man or woman in all Italy who did not wish to know it by heart." His talents and acquirements soon attracted the attention of men of letters, particularly of Cardinal Bembo, through whose influence he obtained an appointment in the papal army under Count Guido Rangone, its commander, and took part in the battle of Pavia. Rangone also employed him on delicate missions to the papal court and that of Francis I. He afterwards spent some time at the court of Ferrara, where the brilliant but visionary Renée of France played so conspicuous a part, and here he acquired the friendship of Ariosto. He finally became the secretary of Ferrante di San Severino, Prince of Salerno, descended from the old Norman kings whose origin is lost in the fogs of Scandinavia. With him he made the Tunis campaign in the army of Charles V., and rendered such good service that the prince gave him a salary of three hundred crowns a year, and, remembering he wielded the pen no less ably than the sword, presented him with a vase of Arabian perfume of exquisite workmanship

for an inkstand, which Tasso afterwards celebrated in two poems. He returned with the prince to Salerno, and on that marvellous shore, grand with the ruins of ancient times, and adorned with all that is luxuriant in nature, he sang the story of Hero and Leander, and the praises of Giulia Gonzaga, whom the Turks wished to carry off, with so much feeling as to win the applause of all the lords and ladies of the court. He vied with the other poets in portraying with all the eloquence of a rich imagination the pleasing qualities of Isabella, Princess of Salerno, who had all that grace and amenity which give such a charm to society. Among these poets was Scipio Capece, who sprang from one of the old Greek dynasties. Few men of that day were more conversant than he with the philosophy of Aristotle, and here among the faded roses of Pæstum he wrote charming verses in the language of Virgil. He became one of Bernardo Tasso's friends.

There used to be a picture of the Visitation at the Louvre painted at this very time by Andrea Sabbatini, of Salerno, a pupil of Raphael's. It was executed, by the order of the prince, for a convent in which one of the daughters of the San Severino family had taken the veil. The princess was painted as the Madonna, an old attendant as St. Elizabeth. The prince represented St. Joseph, and Bernardo Tasso, his secretary, figured as Zacharias. This picture originally hung over the altar of the convent chapel; but a scrupulous archbishop, doubtful as to the propriety of depicting the saints under the form of well known personages, had it removed.\*

The brilliant, happy life Bernardo

\* Mrs. Jameson.

led at Salerno, where he was treated with great distinction, was now to be crowned by a new joy. He was forty-six years old when, through the influence of the prince and princess, he married the beautiful Porzia de Rossi, descended from the old lords of Pistoia and connected with the Caraccioli, the Carafas, and all that was greatest among the Neapolitan nobility, then the proudest in Europe. The marriage was celebrated with pomp in the spring of 1539. His wife had a dowry of more than six thousand ducats, and Bernardo, with his own appointments, and fresh favors on the part of the prince, was able to live in affluence in a palace he bought and furnished magnificently. At one time, through the malice of the envious, he incurred the displeasure of the prince; but his innocence being recognized, he was restored so completely to favor that his revenues were increased, and he was dispensed from all service that he might give himself more completely up to literary pursuits. For this purpose he removed from Salerno.

"I have chosen Sorrento to live in," wrote he to a friend. "It is only a short distance from Naples, and so pleasant and agreeable that the poets make it the abode of syrens. This alone will give you an idea of its beauty. Yes, it is delightful, not on account of attractions that minister to profane pleasures, but those that confer health on both soul and body. I have brought my mind so completely to my studies, after being taken up with one thing after another, like a bird hopping from bough to bough, that you will soon see the effects of it."

No place in the world could meet more fully the requirements of a poet's soul than Sorrento and the neighboring shores. If it be possible to find anywhere a vestige of the earthly Paradise prepared by

God for our first parents before all nature fell under the curse of their transgression and lost its virginal beauty, it is certainly around the Bay of Naples. Elsewhere the world does not meet the requirements of the soul. Here the soul is insufficient to take in a world that surpasses the dream of the most fervid imagination, and it is overpowered by the superabundance of its sensations, that can find no vent but in music, poetry, and the joyous dance, or, among the profoundly religious, in silent adoration. The beautiful shores of the bay with their indentations, overhung by groves of the orange and the citron, look like the festoons of a garland enwreathing town after town like brides adorned for their husbands—Castellamare with its verdant hills, Torre del Greco, Annunziata, and Portici. Above them rises Mt. Vesuvius with its silvery cloud. Before you is Naples, the city of enchantment. Through the golden air you see shores with names that stir the very soul, along which shades wander for ever as in the Elysian Fields. Opposite is the cliff of the Mergellina, where lies Sannazzaro, who sang the divine maternity of Mary, and behind is the tomb of Virgil guarding the passage hewn out in a single night by spirits he had summoned from the vasty deep. Further on is the *Sepolcro* of Agrippina, and Cape Misenum, where the widowed Cornelia so long mourned Pompey, pressing against her breast the sacred urn that refused to answer to her cries. Beyond is beautiful Ischia with its imprisoned giant, where she who was worthy of the homage of Michael Angelo passed her widowhood. Almost in front are the bald heights of Capri, isle of Tibe-

rius, long since cleansed of its profanations. Nature is not saddened by all these memories. The brilliant sun of this climate, as Lamartine says, "*rassérène tout, même la mort.*" They only give a more touching aspect to these isles and promontories of ravishing beauty. The whole scene is like a poem from which no element of beauty or interest is wanting. The sea itself is resplendent. In the morning it is all rose and amethyst, in the evening all crimson and gold. At the calm noontide hour it is "a plane of light between two heavens of azure." Sorrento is on a point of land at the entrance to the bay. The shore does not rise gradually from the water, but springs up abruptly, forming a cliff more than thirty feet high, on which the town stands coquettishly admiring itself in the waters beneath. A deep ravine worn through it by a torrent that flows in the depths constitutes a natural defence. Thousands of orange and lemon trees adorn the gardens with their blossoms and verdure, and embalm the whole region with their perfume. The aloe and myrtle grow on the shore. The heights are silvered with the olive. Everything is poetic, whether we look at earth, sky, or sea. It is a fit place for the sweetest poet of Italy to be born in—worthy indeed of Torquato Tasso.

Bernardo took possession of his house with joy. It stood on the very edge of the cliff that rises up from the sea.

"My wife," he writes, "is beautiful in person and mind, and so in harmony with my tastes and requirements that I could not wish her otherwise than she is. I love her as the light of my eyes, and it is my great happiness to feel that I am as much loved by her. I have one little girl, who is very beautiful—if I am not blinded by paternal affection—and in

which we find many indications of intelligence and goodness. I trust she will prove a source of infinite consolation, for, after her mother, she is my soul and only treasure."

Torquato was born March 11, 1544. Perhaps this Spanish name was given him out of regard for his kinsman, about this time made archbishop of Granada, which with the surrounding region is said to have been first evangelized by San Torcuato, one of the seven bishops sent to Spain in apostolic times. Bernardo was absent at this great event. He had been obliged to accompany the Prince of Salerno to the wars in Piedmont, and thence, after the defeat of Ceresole, to Flanders, and it was not till January, 1545, he returned to Sorrento. Torquato's genius had already begun to display itself, according to Manso,\* who recounts the wonderful things he did in his very first year. He was seldom known to laugh or cry, and when barely seven months old could say several words without stammering. This was extraordinary indeed, for Torquato all his life had an impediment of speech that made him almost a stammerer, as he himself says. However, he was certainly a source of new joy to his father, who now returned to his palace at Salerno, which he adorned with rich Flemish tapestries brought from the Netherlands. In this abode of affluence, under the care of an affectionate mother, and a father who only laid aside the buckler and sword to sing the prowess of Floridant and Amadis, Torquato passed his first years. Salerno still retained something of its grandeur under Robert Guiscard. Its school of

\* Manso, the friend of Torquato Tasso, was a patron of literature at Naples, where Milton was his

medicine, to be sure, had lost its renown, and its knights their love of adventure, but its court was still brilliant; some of its monuments were fine, like the cathedral of St. Matthew, resplendent with marbles torn by the Normans from Pæstum; and nothing could affect its admirable position on the very shore of the sea, surrounded by wooded, aromatic mountains in whose folds stood fair villages gleaming amid the verdure. Here was invented the compass. Here the soldiers of Lothaire found the two volumes of the *Pandects* that have so long formed the basis of European jurisprudence.

Everywhere are grand memories. On every side is all that is most beautiful in nature. It was under these influences, so calculated to impress and develop the imagination, that Torquato's mind unfolded. No wonder, after a childhood spent in this marvellous region that excites in the dullest soul the most intoxicating sensations, his genius acquired such a stamp of attractive grace. His first tutor was Dom Giovanni d'Angeluzzo, a Benedictine monk, who sometimes took him to the celebrated abbey of the Trinità della Cava, in a fresh, enchanting region sheltered by mountains full of herds, and surrounded by woods, and cliffs with their cascades, with the charming valley of La Cava beneath. In this asylum of learning they were cordially welcomed by the monks, and the caresses of Dom Pellegrino dell' Erre, the father abbot, were never forgotten by the child.

Important questions now began to agitate the kingdom. Don Pedro of Toledo wished to establish the Spanish inquisition at Naples. The city revolted. The bell of San Lorenzo summoned the people to

arms. The exasperated populace, led on by the nobility, laid siege to Castel Nuovo, where Don Pedro had taken refuge, and all one day, May 16, 1547, the batteries of the castle were turned toward the city. The inhabitants resolved to send an embassy to Charles V., and chose as one of its members the Prince of Salerno, whose mother, Maria of Aragon, was the cousin-german of the emperor's mother. The prince consulted his friends as to his course, and Bernardo Tasso, among others, urged him to consent to the wishes of the people.

"Consider," said he, "the obligations you owe to your country. Listen to the prayers and cries of the women and children, the arguments of the knights and senators, and the unanimous wish of the city and kingdom which have chosen, as their advocate against the insolence and rapacity of the Spanish, Ferrante di San Severino, who in excellence and grandeur of soul is inferior to none of his glorious ancestors."

The prince yielded to the wish of the people and set out for Nuremberg. The embassy met with a cold reception, and orders were given that eighty-four leaders of the revolt should be put to death. The city of Naples was deprived of many of its privileges, all of its artillery, and its proud title of "most loyal." The prince was detained as a hostage till the city should submit; but, his pride and patriotism revolting at such conditions, he summoned Bernardo to his aid, and by dint of petitions and diplomacy obtained the pardon of the city and a promise that Don Pedro should be recalled on the payment of one hundred thousand ducats. There were great rejoicings at Naples, and, when the prince arrived, the richness of his equipage, the

multitude of cavaliers who attended him, and the transports of the crowd gave his entrance the appearance of a triumph. Don Pedro was enraged and swore the destruction of his enemy. He contested his civil rights, molested him in every possible way, and finally his son, Don Garcias, employed a man from Salerno to assassinate him. He shot at the prince in the valley of La Cava, but only wounded him slightly. The assassin was taken, but Don Pedro shielded him from justice. The prince was now accused of rebellion and heresy. This was too much to bear, and he made his escape from the kingdom, taking Bernardo with him, to lay his complaints before the emperor. But recalling on the way the unfavorable eye with which he had already been received, and unwilling to expose himself to any indignities, he resolved to take service under the king of France. Bernardo urged him to remain at Venice till the emperor's dispositions could be sounded, and not rashly renounce his country and his own domains. The prince despatched a messenger to Charles V., but meeting many other Neapolitan refugees at Venice, whose arguments, joined to those of the French minister, were brought to bear on him, and receiving an order from the emperor to appear before him within fifteen days, he declared boldly for Henry II.

This was a terrible blow to Bernardo. He could not hesitate to follow the fortunes of his benefactor at whose table he had eaten and whose generosity he had so long experienced. Besides, he was under no obligations of loyalty to the Neapolitan government, as he was a citizen of the republic of Venice. He was not, however, the less de-

clared a traitor at Naples. His property was confiscated and he himself sentenced to death. This laid the foundation of the evil fortune that henceforth pursued him and his family, and entailed dependence and suffering on his son's whole life. For a time he hoped to regain his property; but Henry II.'s intended expedition to Naples fell through, and all Bernardo's efforts at the court of France and elsewhere only obtained vain promises of assistance, till the hopes of the poet, as he said, "withered up to such a degree that they never grew green again." He remained at the court of Henry II., charged with the interests of the prince of Salerno, and took a small house at Saint Germain-en-Laye, where he sought distraction from his troubles in poetry. He sang the beauty and brilliant qualities of Marguerite de Valois, hoping through her to obtain a moderate provision from the king; but, notwithstanding his eloquence and perseverance, he did not obtain anything. His chief pleasure was to receive news of his wife and children, who had taken refuge in the palazzo Gambercerti in order to be near their relatives. He thus writes to Dom Giovanni d'Angeluzzo: "Tell me everything you can about my Torquatillo [little Torquato]. You do not know what pleasure you will afford me by so doing." Torquato was now attending the school of the Jesuits just established at Naples, and he was so eager to learn that his mother had to send him off at daybreak attended by a servant with a lantern. Here he made great progress in Greek and Latin, and showed a talent for poetry. He had always been brought up piously, and was so precocious that he was allowed to make his first

communion at the age of nine—an event that made a lasting impression on his mind.

Porzia's position was very distressing. Her husband was under sentence of death and forced to live in exile, his property was confiscated, and she was reduced to the necessity of living on her dowry, which her brothers, taking advantage of her situation, refused to pay in full. Thus unprotected, she had but one desire—to join her husband, as she said in her despair, "even if he were in the infernal regions"—rather strong language; but we must remember she lived on Virgilian shores, near Lake Avernus and the fabled descent into hell. Her grief at length brought on a serious illness, and, by way of a climax to their misfortunes, her daughter Cornelia likewise fell ill. Bernardo no longer hesitated. He wrote the Prince of Salerno for permission to return to Italy. "Every motive," said he, "makes it obligatory to live with my wife and children, that I may share the good and evil sent them by inimical or propitious fortune; otherwise I should fail in my duty, offend God, and be considered by the world as a man of no honor."

San Severino consented to his wishes, and assigned him a pension of three hundred gold crowns. Bernardo, by a special license from the pope, then went to Rome, where he accepted the hospitality of Cardinal Ippolito d'Este—not the patron of Ariosto, but the magnificent Ippolito II., son of Lucrezia Borgia and Alfonso I. d'Este, who built the well-known villa on the heights of Tivoli, where he drew around him artists, poets, and philosophers, making it a kind of Academy. Everywhere were antique vases and statues. There

were the fountains of Arethusa, Leda, and Thetis. One went from the pavilion of Flora to that of Pomona, and from the grotto of Venus to that of the Sibyl. There were long, shady avenues cooled by innumerable jets of water that sprang up among the flowers. Over all spread the broad wings of the heraldic eagle of the house of Este. The shade of the trees, the refulgent light on the campagna, the cascades and sparkling fountains, the delicious odors, and the atmosphere of poetry and learning diffused over everything, were delightful to one who had been so long exiled as Bernardo. He now sent to Naples for Porzia and his children; but her implacable brothers not only prevented her going but spent her income. All Bernardo could obtain was their consent for Torquato to join him. Porzia and her daughter retired to the convent of San Festo. Torquato parted from his mother with many tears in October, 1554. He never saw her again. Twenty-four years after he thus speaks of this heartrending separation in his beautiful lines:

*"Me dal sen della madre empia fortuna  
Pargoletto divelse.*

—Impious fortune tore me, a child, from the bosom of my mother. My heart is still full when I remember her kisses and bitter tears, and the ardent prayers which the rude winds bore swiftly away. Never again was I to press my cheek against hers; never again be folded in the tender embrace of her arms! Unhappy child, like Ascanius or Camilla I followed the footsteps of my wandering sire, uncertain of my way."

Torquato found his father nearly prostrated by physical and mental suffering, but his presence and brilliant promise were a consolation, and their attachment to each other

continued unusually strong. He continued his studies at Rome with his cousin, Christopher Tasso, who had been confided to Bernardo's care—a lively, petulant youth, little inclined to study, who needed the stimulus of Torquato's eagerness to acquire knowledge.

Cardinal Carafa became pope in 1555 under the name of Paul IV. As he was from Naples, and a connection of Porzia's, Bernardo hoped his sad position might be ameliorated through him. But Porzia's physical strength was yielding to her protracted trials. She had a sudden attack of illness in the spring of 1556, and died in twenty-four hours. Bernardo was overwhelmed with grief. He reproached himself at one moment as the cause of her death. At the next he imagined she had been poisoned by her brothers. He blamed himself for abandoning his family out of a sense of honor, and thereby plunging it into such fatal difficulties. He proceeded at once to claim his daughter and his wife's dowry, which now belonged to the children; but their unnatural uncles prevented Cornelia from leaving Naples, and disputed Torquato's part of the inheritance on the plea that he had forfeited it by joining his father, who was still under the penalty of the law. Bernardo was terribly agitated at the thought of never beholding his daughter again. He addressed petitions to cardinals, princes, and everybody who had any influence. Torquato himself thus addressed Vittoria Colonna:

"To aid a poor gentleman overwhelmed with distress and calamity through no fault of his, out of a sense of honor, is the office of a noble, magnanimous soul like that of your excellency. If you do not come to his aid in this misfortune

my poor little father will die of despair, and you will lose a devoted and affectionate servant. Scipio de Rossi, my uncle, hoping to gain possession of the remainder of my mother's heritage, is trying to marry my sister to a poor gentleman with whom she will have to vegetate all the rest of her life. The loss of our fortune is painful, most illustrious lady, but the sacrifice of a person of our blood is infinitely worse. The poor old man has only us two, and beholds himself deprived of his property as well as the wife whom he loved as his own soul. Do not allow the rapacity of my uncle to rob him of a beloved daughter in whose care he hoped to spend peacefully the last years of his old age. Nobody will befriend us at Naples, for my father's position intimidates every one, and our relatives are our enemies. Your excellency alone can, with your authority, relieve us in such a difficulty. My sister is in the house of Giovanni Giacomo Cescia, a relative of my uncle's, and no one is allowed to write her, or even speak to her."

All these efforts were in vain. Cornelia remained in her uncle's power, and married Marzio Sersale, a gentleman of Sorrento of limited means but of noble descent; and as it proved a happy marriage, Bernardo became ultimately reconciled to it, but he never ceased to mourn the loss of his wife. For a while he thought of embracing the ecclesiastical state, and asked Henry II. of France for a benefice.\* The king made many promises, but they remained unfulfilled, and Bernardo's plans were soon changed by events that convulsed all Italy.

Differences arose between the papal and imperial courts, and the Duke of Alba, viceroy of Naples, was despatched with an army towards Rome. Bernardo's position was dangerous. He sent Torquato

\* Many Italians at this time held benefices in France. Cardinal Ippolito d'Este, the Second, was archbishop of Lyons, and afterwards archbishop of Auch, which see he resigned in favor of his nephew, Cardinal Luigi d'Este, the early patron of Torquato Tasso.



and Christopher to their relatives at Bergamo, but remained himself with Pope Paul IV. till the last moment, when he had barely time to escape with his manuscript of the *Amadigi* and a change of raiment. He intended going to Venice, but the Duchess Lucrezia d'Este persuaded him to accept the kind invitation of Guidobaldo della Rovere to Pesaro. The old oak of the Rovere family was now surmounted by a ducal coronet, and the court of Urbino was celebrated throughout Italy for its elevated, intellectual character. Poets, artists, and nobles were all welcomed and honored. Here Baroccio displayed all the magic coloring of his pencil. Here the illustrious Count Baldassare Castiglione held all the lords and ladies spell-bound with his metaphysical disquisitions. The duke received Bernardo with the utmost cordiality, gave him apartments in his own palace, and urged him to send for Torquato to pursue his studies with the young prince of Urbino.

Torquato was at Bergamo, petted and caressed by his uncles, aunts, and all the Tassi. He was also a favorite throughout the town, especially of the Cavaliere Albano, one of the most eminent lawyers of that day, afterwards made cardinal. His father sent for him at the end of 1556, but had to repeat his orders before Torquato could tear himself away, which was not till the spring of 1557. The boy was now thirteen years old. The young Prince Francesco Maria was about the same age. They became such friends that the prince always retained a warm regard for Torquato. They studied Greek and Latin together under Luigi Corrado, of Mantua. Torquato also took lessons in mathematics of Tormandino,

the learned translator of Euclid, and in his leisure hours learned to ride, fence, and acquire all the accomplishments then deemed essential for a gentleman. He copied the *Amadigi* at his father's dictation, and the latter daily read to the duke and duchess a canto of it as it was composed, amid the applause of the learned and distinguished courtiers. Among these were Antonio Gallo, the author of popular comedies; Girolamo Muzio, a poet exiled from Venice; Paolo Casala, a captain, but as learned and witty as he was brave; Paciotto, the eminent philosopher; and Dionigi Atanagi, a distinguished littérateur.

The Prince of Salerno, who came to Ancona in 1557, reproached Bernardo for remaining at a court so devoted to the imperialists, and tried to make him promise to join him at Avignon, where he might receive more aid from the king of France. But Bernardo knew how much the generosity of Henry II. amounted to, and, though his pension often fell short through the lowness of the prince's treasury, he would not leave Pesaro, where he enjoyed the protection of the duke, who often came to his relief. Guidobaldo was general of the Spanish forces in Italy, and hoped by his influence to have Bernardo's wrongs repaired. To this end he urged him to dedicate his *Amadigi* to the king of Spain. Bernardo at first refused. He had been condemned to death and his property confiscated by the Spanish viceroy at Naples. He had lived in exile. His wife had died broken-hearted. His daughter was still withheld from him, and his son was deprived of his inheritance. He could not offer incense to his enemies, and the repugnance was natural. But

the duke, on the other hand, insisted he had made sacrifices enough for the Prince of Salerno. Why ruin his children, whom their dying mother had commended to his care? Bernardo finally yielded. The parts addressed to Henry II. and Marguerite de Valois were suppressed, or modified so as to celebrate the Spanish dynasty, and the poem was dedicated to Philip II.

Bernardo now left Pesaro to have his work printed at Venice. Here he was received with the respect due to his talent, and made a member of the Venetian Academy. He sent for his son, whom the Duke of Urbino allowed to depart with regret. At Venice Torquato studied Dante and Petrarch, and cultivated the love of poetry that was now gaining ascendancy in his mind. His father, wishing him to have some certain means of livelihood without being dependent on the patronage of the great, sent him to the University of Padua, in 1560, to study jurisprudence; but he devoted his leisure to more congenial pursuits, and so astonished his father with the beauties of his poem of *Rinaldo*, written before he was eighteen, that he left him at liberty to follow his own inclinations; and he now went to Bologna to study literature, and here began his *Jerusalem Delivered*.

Bernardo published his *Amadigi* in 1560. It is a romantic epic celebrating the prowess of Amadis of Gaul. This was not his only work. He also wrote sonnets, hymns, eclogues, and letters that were remarkable for their sweetness and polish. The king of Spain showed no disposition to befriend him, notwithstanding his homage, and he accepted an invitation to the court of Mantua, where the duke made him his

chief secretary. Torquato was appointed one of the gentlemen of the household of Cardinal Luigi d'Este, to whom he had dedicated his *Rinaldo*—the son of Renée of France, and nephew of Cardinal Ippolito II. This was his first introduction at the court of Ferrara, the theatre of his glory and his misfortunes. He was then twenty-one years of age, graceful in person, with a face full of pensive, intellectual beauty. It was at the moment of Alfonso II.'s marriage with Barbara, the sister of Maximilian II. of Austria, and the shows, tournaments, and festivities that celebrated her arrival were to the imaginative poet so many visions of enchantment, and they suggested several scenes in his poems. His first seven years at Ferrara were the happiest of his life. The duke's sisters, Lucrezia and Leonora, were beautiful in person and cultivated in mind. He became their favorite companion. He read them his poems and addressed them sonnets. The story of his passion for Leonora is too well known to be repeated, as well as the canzoni full of her praises in which he plays on her name as Petrarch on that of Laura.

Bernardo lived to see the dawn of his son's fame. The Duke of Mantua appointed him governor of Ostiglia, on the Po, where, about a month after taking possession of his office, he fell ill, and, to use his own words, death came

"The balm of slumber soft and deep  
On these his tear-distempered eyes to pour—  
Eyes that, alas! oft opened but to weep."

Torquato went to see him breathe his last. It was on the 4th of September, 1569. He was buried in the church of San Egidio at Mantua, where his monument may still be seen, with a Latin

inspiration by Torquato setting forth the deeds of his father's life. Bernardo's death so affected his son as to cause a fit of illness. In his beautiful poem *O del grand' Appennino* he addresses him in these affecting lines :

" O my father, my good father, looking now  
On thy poor son from heaven, well knowest thou  
What scalding tears I shed  
Upon thy grave, upon thy dying bed ;  
But since thou dwellest in the happy skies,  
'Tis fit I raise to thee no sorrowing eyes :  
Be all my grief on my own head.\*

Cornelia survived her father several years, and Torquato, stung to madness by his persecutors, took refuge with her for a time in 1577. They had never met since their childhood. She was now a widow with two children, and lived at Sorrento. When Torquato presented himself before her in the disguise of a shepherd to ascertain if she still remembered him with sisterly love, and gave her news of her brother, she fainted away. He could no longer doubt, and made himself known. She welcomed him with the utmost affection, and under her tender care he regained his health of body and mind. He revisited Naples years after, when broken down by long imprisonment, but she was dead.

The house at Sorrento where some of Bernardo Tasso's happiest days were spent, and where Torquato was born, was restored by Joseph Bonaparte when king of Naples, and is now converted into a hotel. The Tassi are still remembered on these beautiful shores,

\* Leigh Hunt's translation.

and Torquato's poems, at least, are still sung. M. Dantier tells how, not many years since, crossing the Bay of Naples in a bark, he had among his fellow-passengers an aged Franciscan who had been out on a quest for his convent, a young girl of Ischia in festive attire, come from her brother's wedding, and one of those poor *déclamateurs* called Rinaldi, to be heard on the Molo at Naples, or the Largo del Mercato—so called because they recite the adventures of Rinaldo in preference to all other poetry. As the sun was going down, the latter, at the request of the boatmen, began to recite the loves of Rinaldo and Armida ; then, taking up another canto, recounted the adventures of Erminia among the shepherds—that charming *pastorale* so magically wrought into the tissue of the Italian epic. All this at such an hour, on such a sea, in sight of Sorrento, and even the house in which Tasso was born, was intoxicating. The boatmen marked the rhythm of the stanzas by the cadence of their oars, sometimes pausing as if irresistibly fascinated by the chant. The young girl of Ischia wept over the sorrows of Erminia as, drawing out the silver pin that confined her hair, she bathed the long, pendent tresses in the water. And Fra Gerasimo himself, laying aside his breviary, showed his emotion by repeated exclamations and the movement of the long beard that rose and fell on his breast, and told how Tasso died at Rome in a convent among friars as poor as himself.

## CHRISTINA ROSSETTI'S POEMS.\*

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI is, we believe, the queen of the Preraphaelite school, the literary department of that school at least, in England. To those interested in Preraphaelites and Pieraphaelitism the present volume, which seems to be the first American edition of this lady's poems, will prove a great attraction. The school in art and literature represented under this name, however, has as yet made small progress among ourselves. It will doubtless be attributed to our barbarism, but that is an accusation to which we are growing accustomed, and which we can very complacently bear. The members of the school we know: Ruskin, Madox Brown, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, all the other Rossettis, Swinburne, Morris, and the rest; but we know no school. It has not yet won enough pupils to establish itself among us, and we at best regard it as a fashion that will pass away as have so many others: the low shirt-collar, flowing locks, melancholy visage, and aspect of general disgust with which, for instance, the imitators of Byron, in all save his intellect, were wont to afflict us in the earlier portion of the present century. The fact is, our English friends have a way of running into these fashions that is perplexing, and that would seem to indicate an inability on their part to judge for themselves of literary or artistic merit. To-day Pope and Addison are the fashion; to-morrow,

Byron and Jeffreys; then Wordsworth and Carlyle; then Tennyson and Macaulay; and now Rossetti, Swinburne, Morris, and their kin, if they are not in the ascendant, gain a school, succeed in making a great deal of noise about themselves, and in having a great deal of noise made about them. It is the same with tailoring in days when your tailor, like your cook, is an "artist."

Surely the laws and canons of art are constant. The good is good and the bad bad, by whomsoever written or wrought. Affectation cannot cover poverty of thought or conception. A return to old ways, old models, old methods, is good, provided we go deeper than the mere fringe and trappings of such. How the name Preraphaelite first came we do not know. It originated, we believe, in an earnest revolt against certain viciousness in modern art. It was, if we mistake not, a return, to a great extent, to old-time realism. The question is, How far back did the originators of the movement go? If we take the strict meaning of the word, Homer was a Preraphaelite; so was Virgil; so was Horace; so were the Greek tragedians; so was Aristophanes. Apelles' brush deceived the birds of heaven; Phidias made the marble live ages before Raphael. Nay, how long before Raphael did the inspired prophets catch the very breathings of God to men, and turn them into the music and the religion of all time? These are surely Preraphaelites; yet we find few signs of their teach-

\* Poems by Christina G. Rossetti. Boston: Roberts Brothers. 1876.

ings in this fussy, ardent, and aggressive little modern English school.

We do not deny many gifts to certain members of the school. Swinburne, for instance, seems capable of playing with words as he pleases, of turning and tuning them into any form of melodious rhythm. But he begins and ends with words. Dante Gabriel Rossetti has given us some massive fragments, but nothing more. We look and say, "How much this man might have done!" but there our admiration ceases. Morris has written much and well, but he teases one with the antique. Set Byron by the side of any or all of them, and at once they dwindle almost into insignificance. Yet Byron wrote much that was worthless. He wrote, however, more that was really great. He never played tricks with words; he never allowed them to master him. He began the *Childe Harold* in imitation of Spenser; but he soon struck out so freely and vigorously that, though it may be half heresy to say it, Spenser himself was left far in the rear, and we believe that any intelligent jury in these days would award a far higher prize to the *Childe Harold* than to the *Faerie Queen*. Byron was a born poet. Like all great poets, undoubtedly, he owed much to art; but then art was always his slave. He rose above it. The fault with our present poets, not excepting even Tennyson, is that they are better artists than they are poets. Consequently, they win little cliques and knots of admirers, where others, as did Byron, win a world in spite of itself. It is all the difference between genius and the very highest respectability.

Miss Rossetti we take to be a

very good example of the faults and virtues of her school. Here is a volume of three hundred pages, and it is filled with almost every kind of verse, much of which is of the most fragmentary nature. Some of it is marvellously beautiful; some trash; some coarse; some the very breathing and inspiration of the deep religion of the heart. In her devotional pieces she is undoubtedly at her best. Surely a strong Catholic tradition must be kept alive in this family. Her more famous brother sings of the Blessed Virgin in a spirit that Father Faber might have envied, and in verse that Father Faber never could have commanded. How she sings of Christ and holy things will presently appear. But her other pieces are not so satisfactory. The ultra-melancholy tone, the tiresome repetitions of words and phrases that mark the school, pervade them. Of melancholy as of adversity it may be said "Sweet are its uses," provided "its uses" are not too frequent. An ounce of melancholy will serve at any time to dash a ton of mirth.

But our friends the Pre-Raphaelites positively revel in gloom. They are for ever "hob and nob with Brother Death." They seem to study a skeleton with the keen interest of an anatomist. Wan ghosts are their favorite companions, and ghosts' walks their choice resorts. The scenery described in their poems has generally a sad, sepulchral look. There is a vast amount of rain with mournful sighing winds, laden often with the voices of those who are gone. A favorite trick of a Pre-Raphaelite ghost is to stalk into his old haunts, only to discover that after all people live in much the same style as when he was in the flesh, and can manage to muster a laugh and talk

about mundane matters even though he has departed. Miss Rossetti treats us to several such visits, and in each case the "poor ghost" stalks out again disconsolate.

There is another Preraphaelite ghost who is fond of visiting, just on the day of her wedding with somebody else, the lady who has jilted him. The conversation carried on between the jilt and the ghost of the jilted is, as may be imagined, hardly of the kind one would expect on so festive an occasion. For our own part, we should imagine that the ghost would have grown wiser, if not more charitable, by his visit to the other world, and would show himself quite willing to throw at least the ghost of a slipper after the happy pair.

Between the Preraphaelite ghosts and the Preraphaelite lovers there seems really little difference. The love is of the most tearful description; the lady, wan at the start, has to wait and wait a woful time for the gentleman, who is always a dreadfully indefinite distance away. Strange to say, he generally has to make the journey back to his lady-love on foot. Of course on so long a journey he meets with all kinds of adventures and many a lady gay who keep him from his true love. She, poor thing, meanwhile sits patiently at the same casement looking out for the coming of her love. The only difference in her is that she grows wanner and more wan, until at length the tardy lover arrives, of course, only to find her dead body being carried out, and the good old fairy-story ending—that they were married and lived happy ever after—is quite thrown out.

It will be judged from what we have said that, whatever merits the Preraphaelite school of poetry

may possess, cheerfulness is not one of them. As a proof of this we only cull a few titles from the contents of the book before us.—"A Dirge" is the eighth on the list; then come in due order, "After Death," "The Hour and the Ghost," "Dead before Death," "Bitter for Sweet," "The Poor Ghost," "The Ghost's Petition," and so on. But Miss Rossetti is happily not all melancholy. The opening piece, the famous "Goblin Market," is thoroughly fresh and charming, and, to our thinking, deserves a place beside "The Pied Piper of Hamelin." Is not this a perfect picture of its kind?

"Laughed every goblin  
When they spied her peeping;  
Came towards her hobbling,  
Flying, running, leaping,  
Puffing and blowing,  
Chuckling, clapping, crowing,  
Clucking and gobbling,  
Mopping and mowing,  
Full of airs and graces,  
Pulling wry faces,  
Demure grimaces,  
Cat-like and rat-like,  
Ratel and vombat like,  
Snail-paced in a hurry,  
Parrot-voiced and whistler,  
Helter-skelter, hurry-scurry,  
Chattering like magpies,  
Fluttering like pigeons,  
Gliding like fishes—  
Hugged her and kissed her;  
Squeezed and caressed her;  
Stretched up their dishes,  
Panniers and plates;  
'Look at our apples  
Russet and dun,  
Bob at our cherries,  
Bite at our peaches,  
Citrons and dates,  
Grapes for the asking,  
Pears red with basking  
Out in the sun,  
Plums on their twigs;  
Pluck them and suck them,  
Pomegranates, figs'"

Of course this is not very high poetry, nor as such is it quoted here. But it is one of many wonderful pieces of minute and life-like painting that occur in this strange poem. From the same we quote another passage as exhibiting what

we would call a splendid fault in the poet :

" White and golden Lizzie stood,  
Like a lily in a flood—  
Like a rock of blue-veined stone  
Lashed by tides obstreperously ;  
Like a beacon left alone  
In a hoary, roaring sea,  
Sending up a golden fire ;  
Like a fruit-crowned orange-tree  
White with blossoms honey-sweet,  
Sore beset by wasp and bee ;  
Like a royal virgin town,  
Topped with gilded dome and spire,  
Close beleaguered by a fleet,  
Mad to tug her standard down."

Undoubtedly these are fine and spirited lines, and, some of them at least, noble similes. What do they call up to the mind of the reader? One of those heroic maidens who in history have led armies to victory and relieved nations—a Joan of Arc leading a forlorn hope girl around by the English. Any picture of this kind it would fit; but what is it intended to represent? A little girl struggling to prevent the little goblin-men from pressing their fatal fruits into her mouth! The statue is far too large for the pedestal. Here is another instance of the same, the lines of which might be taken from a Greek chorus :

" Her locks streamed like the torch  
Borne by a racer at full speed,  
Or like the mane of horses in their flight,  
Or like an eagle when she stems the light  
Straight toward the sun,  
Or like a caged thing freed,  
Or like a flying flag when armies run "

The locks that are like all these wonderful things are those of Lizzie's little sister Laura, who had tasted the fruits of the goblin-men. How different from this is "The Convent Threshold"! It is a strong poem, but of the earth earthy. As far as one can judge, it is the address of a young lady to her lover, who is still in the world and apparently enjoying a gay life. She has sinned, and remorse or some other motive seems to have driven

her within the convent walls. She gives her lover admirable advice, but the old leaven is not yet purged out, as may be seen from the final exhortation :

" Look up, rise up ; for far above  
Our palms are grown, our place is set ;  
There we shall meet as once we met,  
And love with old familiar love."

Which may be a very pleasant prospect for separated lovers, but is scarcely heaven.

The poem contains a strong contrast—and yet how weak a one to the truly spiritual soul!—between the higher and the lower life.

" Your eyes look earthward ; mine look up.  
I see the far-off city grand,  
Beyond the hills a watered land,  
Beyond the gulf a gleaming strand  
Of mansions where the righteous sup  
Who sleep at ease among the trees,  
Or wake to sing a cadenced hymn  
With Cherubim and Seraphim ;  
They bore the cross, they drained the cup,  
Racked, roasted, crushed, rent limb from limb—  
They, the off-scouring of the world ;  
The heaven of starry heavens unfurled,  
The sun before their face is dim.

" You, looking earthward, what see you ?  
Milk-white, wine-flushed among the vines,  
Up and down leaping, to and fro,  
Most glad, most full, made strong with wines,  
Blooming as peaches pearled with dew,  
Their golden, windy hair afloat,  
Love-music warbling in their throat,  
Young men and women come and go."

Something much more characteristic of the school to which Miss Rossetti belongs is "The Poor Ghost," some of which we quote as a sample :

" Oh ! whence do you come, my dear friend, to me,  
With your golden hair all fallen below your knee,  
And your face as white as snow-drops on the lea,  
And your voice as hollow as the hollow sea ?"

" From the other world I come back to you ;  
My locks are uncured with dripping, dripping dew  
You know the old, whilst I know the new ;  
But to-morrow you shall know this too."

" Life is gone, then love too is gone :  
It was a reed that I leant upon ;  
Never doubt I will leave you alone,  
And not wake you rattling bone with bone."

But this is too lugubrious. There are many others of a similar tone.

but we prefer laying before the reader what we most admire. We have no doubt whatever that there are many persons who would consider such poems as the last quoted from the gems of the volume. To us they read as though written by persons in the last stage of consumption, who have no hope in life, and apparently very little beyond. The lines, too, are as heavy and clumsy as they can be. Perhaps the author has made them so on purpose to impart an additional ghastliness to the poem; for, as seen already, she can sing sweetly enough when she pleases. Another long and very doleful poem is that entitled "Under the Rose," which repeats the sad old lesson that the sins of the parents are visited on the heads of the children. A third, though not quite so sad, save in the ending, is "The Prince's Progress," which is one of the best and most characteristic in the volume. As exhibiting a happier style, we quote a few verses:

"In his world-end palace the strong Prince sat,  
Taking his ease on cushion and mat;  
Close at hand lay his staff and his hat.  
    'When wilt thou start? The bride waits, O youth!'  
Now the moon's at full, I tarried for that:  
Now I start in truth

'But tell me first, true voice of my doom,  
Of my veiled bride in her maiden bloom;  
Keeps she watch through glare and through gloom,  
Watch for me asleep and awake?'  
Spell-bound she watches in one white room,  
And is patient for thy sake

'By her head lilies and rosebuds grow;  
The lilies droop—will the rosebuds blow?  
The silver slim lilies hang the head low,  
Their stream is scanty, their sunshine rare.  
Let the sun blaze out, and let the stream flow:  
They will blossom and wax fair.

'Red and white poppies grow at her feet;  
The blood-red wait for sweet summer heat,  
Wrapped in bud-coats hairy and neat;  
But the white buds swell; one day they will burst,  
Will open their death-cups drowsy and sweet;  
Which will open the first?'  
Then a hundred sad voices lifted a wail;  
And a hundred glad voices piped on the gale:

'Time is short, life is short,' they took up the tale:  
'Life is sweet, love is sweet; use to-day while you may;  
Love is sweet and to-morrow may fail;  
Love is sweet, use to-day.'

The Prince turns out to be a sad laggard; but what else could he be when he had to traverse such lands as this?

"Off he set. The grass grew rare,  
A blight lurked in the darkening air,  
The very moss grew hueless and spare,  
The last daisy stood all astunt;  
Behind his back the soil lay bare,  
But larer in front.

"A land of chasm and rent, a land  
Of rugged blackness on either hand;  
If water trickled, its track was tanned  
With an edge of rust to the chink;  
If one stamped on stone or on sand,  
It returned a clink.

"A lifeless land, a loveless land,  
Without lair or nest on either hand  
Only scorpions jerked in the sand,  
Black as black iron, or dusty pale  
From point to point sheer rock was manned  
By scorpions in mail.

"A land of neither life nor death,  
Where no man buildeth or fashioneth,  
Where none draws living or dying breath;  
No man cometh or goeth there,  
No man doth, seeketh, saith,  
In the stagnant air."

So far for the general run of Miss Rossetti's poems. It will be seen that they are nothing very wonderful, in whatever light we view them. They are not nearly so great as her brother's; indeed, they will not stand comparison with them at all. The style is too varied, the pieces are too short and fugitive to be stamped with any marked originality or individuality, with the exception, perhaps, of the "Goblin Market." But there is a certain class of her poems examination of which we have reserved for the last. Miss Rossetti has set up a little devotional shrine here and there throughout the volume, where we find her on her knees, with a strong faith, a deep sense of spiritual needs, a feeling of the real littleness of the life passing around us, of the true greatness of what is



to come after, a sense of the presence of the living God before whom she bows down her soul into the dust; and here she is another woman. As she sinks her poetry rises, and gushes up out of her heart to heaven in strains sad, sweet, tender, and musical that a saint might envy. What in the wide realm of English poetry is more beautiful or more Catholic than this?

#### THE THREE ENEMIES.

##### *The Flesh.*

"Sweet, thou art pale."  
 "More pale to see,  
 Christ hung upon the cruel tree  
 And bare his Father's wrath for me."

"Sweet, thou art sad."  
 "Beneath a rod  
 More heavy, Christ for my sake trod  
 The wine-press of the wrath of God."

"Sweet, thou art weary."  
 "Not so Christ;  
 Whose mighty love of me sufficed  
 For Strength, Salvation, Eucharist."

"Sweet, thou art footsore."  
 "If I bled,  
 His feet have bled: yea, in my need  
 His Heart once bled for mine indeed."

##### *The World.*

"Sweet, thou art young"  
 "So He was young  
 Who for my sake in silence hung  
 Upon the Cross with Passion wrung."

"Look, thou art fair"  
 "He was more fair  
 Than men, Who deigned for me to wear  
 A visage marred beyond compare."

"And thou hast riches."  
 "Daily bread:  
 All else is His; Who living, dead,  
 For me lacked where to lay His Head."

"And life is sweet."  
 "It was not so  
 To Him, Whose Cup did overflow  
 With mine unutterable woe."

##### *The Devil.*

"Thou drinkest deep."  
 "When Christ would sup  
 He drained the dregs from out my cup.  
 So how should I be lifted up?"

"Thou shalt win Glory."  
 "In the skies,  
 Lord Jesus, cover up mine eyes  
 Lest they should look on vanities."

"Thou shalt have Knowledge."  
 "Helpless dust,  
 In thee, O Lord, I put my trust:  
 Answer Thou for me, Wise and Just."

"And Might."  
 "Get thee behind me, Lord,  
 Who hast redeemed and not abhorred  
 My soul, oh! keep it by thy Word."

And what a cry is this? Who has not felt it in his heart? It is entitled "Good Friday":

"Am I a stone and not a sheep,  
 That I can stand, O Christ I beneath Thy  
 Cross,  
 To number drop by drop Thy Blood's  
 slow loss,  
 And yet not weep?"

"Not so those women loved  
 Who with exceeding grief lamented Thee;  
 Not so fallen Peter weeping bitterly;  
 Not so the thief was moved;

"Not so the Sun and Moon  
 Which hid their faces in a starless sky,  
 A horror of great darkness at broad  
 noon,—  
 I, only I.

"Yet give not o'er,  
 But seek Thy sheep, true Shepherd of  
 the flock;  
 Greater than Moses, turn and look once  
 more  
 And smite a rock.

It would seem that the heart which can utter feelings like these should be safely housed in the one true fold. There, and there only, can such hearts find room for expansion; for there alone can they find the food to fill them, the where-with to satisfy their long yearnings, the light to guide the many wanderings of their spirits, the strength to lift up and sustain them after many a fall and many a cruel deceit. Outside that threshold, however near they may be to it, they will in the long run find their lives empty. With George Eliot, they will find life only a sad satire and hope a very vague thing. Like her heroine, Dorothea Brooke, the finer feelings and aspirations of their really spiritual and intensely religious natures will only end in petty collisions with the petty people

around them, and thankful they may be if all their life does not turn out to be an exasperating mistake, as it must be a failure, compared with that larger life that they only dimly discern. How truly Miss Rossetti discerns it may be seen in her sonnet on "The World".

"By day she woos me, soft, exceeding fair;  
But all night as the moon so changeth she;  
Loathsome and foul with hideous leprosy,  
And subtle serpents gliding in her hair,  
By day she woos me to the outer air,  
Ripe fruits, sweet flowers, and full satiety;  
But through the night, a beast she gnaws at me,  
A very monster void of love and prayer.  
By day she stands a lie: by night she stands,  
In all the naked horror of the truth,  
With pushing horns and clawed and clutching hands,  
Is this a friend indeed that I should sell  
My soul to her, give her my life and youth,  
Till my feet, cloven too, take hold on hell?"

Could there be anything more complete than this whole picture, or anything more startling yet true in conception than the image in the last line, which we have italicized? One feels himself, as it were, on the very verge of the abyss, and the image of God, in which he was created, suddenly and silently falling from him. But a more beautiful and daring conception is that in the poem "From House to Home." Treading on earth, the poet mounts to heaven, but by the thorny path that alone leads to it. Her days seemed perfect here below, and all happiness hers. Her house is fair and all its surroundings beautiful. She tells us that

"Ofttimes one like an angel walked with me,  
With spirit-discerning eyes like flames of fire,  
But deep as the unfathomed, endless sea,  
Fulfilling my desire."

The spirit leaves her after a time, calling her home from banishment into "the distant land." All the beauty of her life goes with him, and hope dies out of her heart, until something whispered that they should meet again in a distant land.

"I saw a vision of a woman, where  
Night and new morning strive for domination;  
Incomparably pale, and almost fair,  
And sad beyond expression.

"I stood upon the outer barren ground,  
She stood on inner ground that budded flowers;  
While circling in their never-slackening round  
Danced by the mystic hours.

"But every flower was lifted on a thorn,  
And every thorn shot upright from its sands  
To gall her feet; hoarse laughter pealed in scorn  
With cruel clapping hands.

"She bled and wept, yet did not shrink; her strength  
Was strung up until daybreak of delight;  
She measured measureless sorrow toward its length,  
And breadth, and depth, and height

"Then marked I how a chain sustained her form,  
A chain of living links not made nor riven:  
It stretched sheer up through lightning, wind,  
and storm,  
And anchored fast in heaven.

"One cried: 'How long? Yet founded on the Rock  
She shall do battle, suffer, and attain.'  
One answered: 'Faith quakes in the tempest shock:  
Strengthen her soul again.'

"I saw a cup sent down and come to her  
Brimful of loathing and of bitterness:  
She drank with livid lips that seemed to stir  
The depth, not make it less.

"But as she drank I spied a hand distil  
New wine and virgin honey; making it  
First bitter-sweet, then sweet indeed, until  
She tasted only sweet.

"Her lips and cheeks waxed rosy—fresh and young,  
Drinking she sang: 'My soul shall nothing want';  
And drank anew, while soft a song was sung,  
A mystical low chant.

"One cried: 'The wounds are faithful of a friend—  
The wilderness shall blossom as a rose.'  
One answered, 'Rend the veil, declare the end,  
Strengthen her ere she goes!'"

Then earth and heaven are rolled up like a scroll, and she gazes into heaven. Wonderful indeed is the picture drawn of the heavenly court; but we have already quoted at such length that we fear to tire our readers. Still, we must find room for the following three verses:

"Tier beyond tier they rose and rose and rose  
So high that it was dreadful, flames with flames:

No man could number them, no tongue disclose  
Their secret sacred names,

"As though one pulse stirred all, one rush of blood  
Fed all, one breath swept through them myriad-  
voiced,  
They struck their harps, cast down their crowns,  
they stood  
And worshipped and rejoiced.

"Each face looked one way like a moon new-lit,  
Each face looked one way towards its Sun of  
Love;  
Drank love and bathed in love and mirrored it  
And knew no end thereof."

We might go on quoting with pleasure and admiration most of these devotional pieces, but enough has been given to show how different a writer is Miss Rossetti in her religious and in her worldly mood. The beauty, grace, pathos, sublimity often, of the one weary us of the other. In the one she warbles or sings, with often a flat and discord-

ant note in her tones that now please and now jar; in the other she is an inspired prophetess or priestess chanting a sublime chant or giving voice to a world's sorrow and lament. In the latter all affectation of word, or phrase, or rhythm disappears. The subjects sung are too great for such pettiness, and the song soars with them. The same thing is true of her brother, the poet. Religion has inspired his loftiest conceptions, and a religion that is certainly very unlike any but the truth. We trust that the reverence and devotion to the truth which must lie deep in the hearts of this gifted brother and sister may bear their legitimate fruit, and end not in words only, but blossom into deeds which will indeed lead them "From House to Home."

## ORIGINAL PAPERS.

### LECTURES ON POETRY, BY T. CAMPBELL.

#### LECTURE III.

#### *Greek Poetry.*

IT is impossible to trace the majestic stream of Greek poetry to its earliest fountains. That Greece had strains anterior to the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, is evident from the nature of poetical composition,\* as well as from the works of Homer. Greek poetry could not have dispensed with the usual progressiveness of human art, or have sprung up at once to the full effulgence of epic excellence, like a tropical sunrise unpreceded by a dawn. Accordingly we find Homer, as we might expect, alluding to the heroic songsters of a former period, and describing their condition with that air of probability which distinguishes all his pictures of human manners. He speaks apparently with the full breast of a poet whose ambition had been fired and fostered by having seen prescriptive honours attached to the poetical art. Deliberate and circumstantial, he seems assured of commanding deep attention and implicit belief: and though he is too simple, and too proudly embarked in his subject, to advert either to himself or his hearers, yet whenever he names the poets of heroic ages, he throws a glory over their memory, an air of magic over their influence, and attaches a sacred importance to their vocation. The value which he attributes to poetical inspiration is intrinsic, and independent of all other gifts and accomplishments. The characters of bard and prophet, so often identified among a rude people, are completely separated by him. He neither attributes the power of song to any of his seers, nor that of prescience to any of his poets; nor do the latter ever affect to be orators, highly as the gift of eloquence is described to have been held in the Homeric times; but, holding a dignified reserve among the loquacious Greeks, they are the only personages who never trouble us with orations.† It is true that in pretensions to

\* Nec dubitari debet quin fuerint ante Homerum poetæ.—CICERO, *Brut.* I. cap. 18.

† Only one of his poets (Phemius) speaks, in the whole course of the *Odyssey*, but once, and that once in order to save his life.—*ODYSS.* xxii. 345.

heavenly inspiration his poets are not even behind his priests ; and we have a proof of vanity being a very old poetical infirmity, in finding that Thamyris, the oldest of the tribe, was struck blind for self-conceit. In all this, however, Homer paints the bardic character as ancient and honourable, and his verisimilitude has been seldom called in question. Simple too as the art of Poetry must have still been, he makes Phemius boast of it as a power “ of manifold argument ; ” \* and we may suppose Homer to have found it possessing at least some variety of character, from the diversity of occasions to which he describes it as already applied. Song was alike the soul of the joyous feast and of the solemn sacrifice. It accompanied the nuptial dance, and was heard in lamentations over the warrior’s bier. † The strains of Demodochus, in the *Odyssey*, exhibit a wide opposition of gaiety and pathos. At one time ‡ they describe the merriment of the Gods at the detection of Mar’s gallantry with Venus ; at another time, they melt the heart of Ulysses with the “ tale of Troy,” till the hero wept, says Homer, § in one of his most beautiful and prolonged similes, “ *as a woman weeps over the husband of her love, who has fallen in battle, on whom she gazes as he pants and dies, till the enemy, smiting her shoulders with a spear, commands her far away into captivity and bondage.* ” ||

The hospitality of a Greek palace is never described by Homer without the presence of a bard, to heighten its festivity. I know not if the *Odyssey* can be said to show the bard to have ever been a permanent inmate of the Prince’s house ; though when we are told of Clytemnestra ¶ being left by her husband, at his departure for Troy, under the guardianship of a poet, \*\* whom Ægisthus was obliged to get removed to a desert island before he could accomplish his purposes on the Queen, we can scarcely help supposing that the lady would be placed under the same roof with her moral preceptor. On another occasion, we find the bard, in the *Odyssey*, not domesticated in the royal mansion ; but apparently a frequent guest, and brought to it from no great distance in the neighbourhood. †† Phemius complains, in the *Odyssey*, of having been compelled by force to attend the suitors to the house of Penelope. Demodochus is invited to the feast of Alcinous among the chieftains of the land. The herald takes a

\* *Odyss.* xxii. 347.

† Two singers are placed as mourners over the dead body of Hector.

‡ *Odyss.* viii. 266.

§ *Odyss.* viii. 521.

|| I have abridged this exquisite passage.

¶ *Odyss.* iii. 267.

\*\* When we speak of a poet in Homeric times, we must always understand a singer ; as the song, the lyre, and sometimes even the dance, accompanied poetic strains. Vide *Odyss.* iv. 17. The accompanying dance there alluded to, was probably pantomimic.

†† *Odyss.* viii. 43.

kindly guidance of his blind steps, and his venerable figure is described as placed in a silver-studded chair, beside the pillar on which his lyre is suspended.\* In another passage allusion is made to the bard being received as a wanderer, and to his being certain, at all times, of an hospitality which was considered as his due, and not as eleemosynary. His profession is distinctly spoken of as one entitled to public support, like that of the physician, the architect, and soothsayer—

The prophet, and the healer of disease,  
The skilful artist, and the bard inspired  
With strains that charm his hearers—these we seek,  
And these, in every climate under Heaven,  
Are dearly prized.

The active spirit of the Greeks appears, from the Homeric draught of their manners, to have been much addicted to travelling; and of all members of society the bard had the most agreeable motives for being a traveller, in the security of his being welcomed wherever he went in his love of novelty and in his thirst of knowledge. It is to this circumstance that we are probably indebted for the deep acquaintance with human nature and manners which so much enchants us in the works of Homer. He must have been an extensive traveller, and a poet of the people. Had it been otherwise, and had he been a mere retainer of a Prince's court, his poetry would have assumed a stiff, inflated, and servile air. In that case we should not have enjoyed such endearing traits of homely description, as that of the old stone bank on which Neleus sat before his mansion; or of the feelings of Ulysses on discerning the smoke of his native roof.†

\* Odyss. vii. 385.

† The day of quarrelling with Homer's simplicity is now gone by. But it is not an hundred years since what was called Criticism derided his simplicity.—It is Lord Chesterfield (I think), or some judge equally competent, who compares Achilles's reproaches of Agamemnon to the language of that place where (as Addison says) "*they sell the best fish, and speak the plainest English.*"—Lamotte's (a French critic) observations on Homer are still more amusing. "We see not," he says, "in the Iliad, either a crowd of staff-officers around Agamemnon, or a *garde de corps*—Agamemnon dresses himself (*it was lucky that powdering and shaving were not yet in fashion*)—and Achilles with his own hand cooks and spreads a repast for the deputies of the army."—One might have helped the Frenchman to better instances of what he calls Homer's *grossièreté*, such as a Princess Royal washing and bleaching the family linen. Perhaps the *grossest* of all simplicities occurs at the table of Alcinous: the poet Demodochus at that table could be in no want of food, yet Ulysses sends him by the herald, a plate of fat pork, as a compliment in return for the pleasure he had received from hearing his poetry. It was exactly as if a modern Prince had condescended to honour a poet at table by inviting him to drink a glass of wine.—Many other *grossièretés* could have been picked out of Homer; but one instance was as good as twenty to a critic who could propose to accommodate Agamemnon with a *valet de chambre*, or Achilles with a *maître d'hôtel*.

The bardic profession could not have commenced with Homer, who describes it as thus distinct and popular; for, even if an individual could create an art, it requires a succession of artists to form a profession. At the same time, whilst we must suppose that there were poems in Greece anterior to the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, it is impossible, though we may guess at their subjects, to determine what those poems were, and by whom they were composed.

Homer has recorded only three poets\*—Thamyris, Phemius, and Demodochus, no relics of whom are pretended to be known; and the two last appear to be names of fancy rather than of tradition. He has nowhere mentioned either Orpheus† or Musæus; and his silence respecting them, though not a proof, is something like a presumption, against the idea of their poetical existence having preceded his own. But works nominally ascribed to those two bards are still extant; and to judge by Mons. de Sales, a French academician‡, there is still a belief in the nineteenth century, that we possess the authentic poetry of Orpheus the Argonaut, and of Musæus, the son of Eumolpus and the Moon. Mons. de Sales, with a great deal more modesty than Stephens's auctioneer, who sold heads "*warranted antediluvian*," carries his biographical minuteness only a little farther back than the siege of Troy. He assures us that Orpheus captivated the clergy of Egypt by his affable manners, and that he lost his wife in consequence of teasing her with assiduities when she ought to have been left to solitude and repose. He proves that Orpheus was the son of a king, because he has told us so himself in his *Argonautics*; and talks of Musæus, his poetical descendant, as well known by his "fine poem" of *Hero and Leander*. Unfortunately this fine poem appears to have come into the world about 1600 years later than Mons. de Sales had imagined; and the *Argonautics* is also a comparatively modern poem, making mention of countries with which the Argonauts had probably the same acquaintance as with Botany Bay.

Yet, though nobody but Monsieur de Sales believes the poems of Orpheus, as we have them, to be as old as the golden fleece, yet men deserving graver notice have deemed them the

\* There is a passage in the *Iliad* where the name of Linus has been supposed by some to be alluded to; but Heyné and other critics of the first authority, reject this idea, and understand the word *λινον* to mean simply a chord.

† Homer mentions Amphion, but not as a poet; and says nothing of his building a city by the power of song.

‡ *Histoire d'Homère et d'Orphé*, Paris, 1808.

refabricated relics of an ante-Homeric poet.\* Orpheus, as a bard and founder of mysteries, is frequently mentioned by the ancients.† Pindar calls him the father of poetry;‡ and Plato quotes from works that were certainly current in his age, under the names of Orpheus and Musæus. Matthew Gesner§ therefore supposes that the Athenian Onomacritus, a contemporary of Xerxes, renovated the Orphic poetry from a more ancient dialect, interpolating and abridging it, as he owns, but by no means absolutely forging it.

Certainly, though Homer has been silent about him, an ante-Homeric Orpheus may have existed, and Thrace looks like the probable country of a primitive poet and mystagogue. For the mystic poetry of the ancients, according to Strabo, had many traces of Thracian origin, and the Thamyras of Homer was from that country. The tomb of Orpheus was shown in Greece, and was honoured by the beautiful fiction, that the nightingales in the branches around it excelled all others in sweetness of song. But there was nevertheless an evidently divided opinion among the ancients respecting the authenticity and extreme antiquity of the Orphic works. Cicero imputes them to Cercops, a disciple of Pythagoras. Pindarion, as quoted by Sextus Empiricus,|| makes Onomacritus their fabricator, and declares it the fixed opinion of his time that Greece had no ante-Homeric poetry. But these are comparatively modern sceptics. Cicero says that Aristotle doubted if such a poet as Orpheus had ever existed;¶ and the Stagyræite speaks doubtingly of “*the so called poems of Orpheus and Musæus.*” To go to the fountain-head of history, Herodotus declares his belief, that all the poets given out as older than Homer were of more recent date.\*\*

It has been conceived, however, by very sensible inquirers, that the name of Orpheus, though possibly fabulous, may still represent some real poet who communicated in songs the holy symbols and mysterious secrets of doctrines more pure and ancient than the theology of Homer—doctrines originating in the Asiatic ancestry of the Greeks, or brought less directly from Egypt, that may have been even dim recollections of Divine revelation. Yet I cannot help suspecting that the quantum of poetry, which could have come down to the age of written literature in

\* Gesneri Prolegomena Orphica. Rhunkenius also pronounced the Orphic poetry very old, though, with an ambiguity passing all understanding, he allowed at the same time, that it might be of the Alexandrian school.—Vide Hermann’s Orphica, p. 680.

† By Euripides, Med. 543. Iphig. in Aulide, 1711. In Rhes. 943. By Aristophanes, Ran. 1064.

‡ *Ὀρμικτὰς ἀοιδᾶν πατήρ*.—Pind. Pyth. iv. 13.

§ Gesneri Prolegomena Orphica.

|| Sextus Empiricus adv. Mathematic.

¶ Cicero de Nat. Deor. i. 38.

\*\* Herodotus, Euterpe, 53.



Greece from such an ante-Homeric poet, must be at most only a conjectural something, like a mathematical point without definable form or magnitude. At whatever time the Greek mysteries were founded, Homer is silent respecting them; but at the commencement of the republican era in Greece they certainly received a new impulse and enlargement, from the rise of philosophy, and Orpheus was the great poetical authority held out for mystic doctrines and institutions.\* The connexion between philosophy and mysticism could not, from the nature of the former, be permanent; but, undoubtedly, there was a connexion between them at an early period in Greece. The institutions of Orpheus and Pythagoras, we are told by Herodotus, were the same. Now, admitting that this circumstance arose from both Orpheus and Pythagoras having drawn mystic doctrines in common from Egypt, yet it is impossible not to suspect that a teacher and reformer such as Pythagoras was, would blend such doctrines with philosophical conceptions of his own. St. Clemens says, that the Greek mysteries were founded by philosophers. Early Philosophy at this period might, no doubt, conceal sublime principles under the veil of secrecy and mystic fraternities. But still she allied herself intimately with priestcraft, and externally, at least, with orgies and mummery; and where these existed, fraud could not be long absent. The veil of mysticism was alike favourable to a visionary and an innovating spirit; and as the metaphysics of an Argonaut could not have been a perfect prototype of the Pythagorean philosophy, the name of Orpheus was likely to be used as a cloak for many new ideas. In the later period of Greek literature, the name of Orpheus has been undoubtedly made an heir-loom of forgery, and it probably was so from the beginning.

Great and good as Pythagoras was, more than one of his scholars is accused of having fabricated Orphic poetry; and the blame being divided, only shows that there were partners in the concern. Onomacritus appears as an old and eminent name in the business. Gesner asserts, that he could not have forged all that he gave out to be Orphic. Of his inability to forge, I know of no proof, except his having been once detected in the fact. But that he had often succeeded, in spite of this one detection, we are helped to guess by Pausanias's frequently rejecting things attributed to Orpheus, as the fabrications of Onomacritus. Of his general modesty and uprightness of character we are pretty well assured by Herodotus, who gives a short but pithy account of him.† He was a priest and a vender of oracles; who was banished from Athens by Hipparchus, for fraudulently pretend-

\* Herodotus, Euterpe, 81.

† Herodot. Polymnia, 6.

ing to have found in Musæus a prophecy, that some of the Greek islands were to be swallowed up in the ocean. His banishment was probably more for spreading public alarm, than for executing literary fraud. However this may be, we afterwards find him at the court of Xerxes, spiriting up the Persian monarch to the invasion of Greece. The great king, it seems, had scruples about the undertaking; but Onomacritus plied him with ancient prophecies, which he made so favourable to the barbarians, as to leave no doubt in his majesty's mind, that he should settle the peace of Europe, by seizing on the firs and demolishing the liberties of Athens. If Onomacritus then was a first or main republisher of the Orphic poetry, it could scarcely have come through more suspicious hands, nor can better requisites for an extensive forger be well imagined, than those that meet us in the character of this traitor, renegado, parasite, and salesman of old oracles.

As to the extant Orphic poetry, it is, in fact, not the work of one man, nor of one age; and is not believed by the best judges to be by any means so old as the age of Xerxes. The Hymns are allowed to be the oldest, though even they bear some marks which argue against extreme antiquity. No one can suppose them, as a body, to be the same with those which Pausanias says were sung by the Eumolpidæ in the Eleusinian mysteries; for he tells us that these were inconsiderable in number, and ours amount to eighty-five. But it is possible that they may have preserved a wreck of the forms and expressions of Eleusinian worship. The work entitled the Argonautics is pronounced, by the best judges, to belong to the Alexandrian school; and the Lithica, or poem on stones, which mentions substances unknown in Europe in the age of Pliny, betrays itself, by its mineralogy, to have been written probably as late as the reign of the Emperor Commodus.

The Iliad and Odyssey have no vestige of either religious or philosophical mysticism. Not but that many Greek philosophers pretended to spiritualize their meaning, and to discover refined doctrines, profoundly hid under the veil of their fiction. But the experiment would not succeed. Homer may have some allegory, but his general character is remote from the allegoric, and the reverse of the mystic. This was apparent to other philosophers, such as Pythagoras, Xenophanes, and Heraclitus, who openly taxed him with couching impious fables under his beautiful verses. Hence philosophy, as she grew up in Greece, was complimented by a part of her admirers, as the true daughter of Homeric poetry, whilst, by others, she was flattered as too wise and goodly a personage to have sprung from so old, so ignorant, and so irreligious a parent. Upon the whole, however, the philosophers kept on good terms with the public, by speaking

with tolerable respect of Homer and of poetry at large. Even Plato, when he supposes a poet to visit his republic, proposes to dismiss him with ointment on his hair, a crown upon his head, and a flattering apology—perhaps as likely to suit poetical taste, as an invitation to stay in so demure a commonwealth; and one which, in all probability, satisfied Homer himself, if his soul took any concern in the affairs of Plato's Republic.

But though the Homeric poems were not made for sects, but for the universe, and though they are the earliest unequivocal documents of Greek genius, yet neither is their era exactly ascertained, nor the history of their author known, from his cradle to his grave. The ancients consulted oracles about his birthplace, but disbelieved them when they pretended to fix it. The most received opinion, however, is that he was of Ionia: as his descriptions of winds and countries often agree with the face of nature, when looked at from that quarter; whilst they would be false and strange if taken at Argos or Athens.

The idea of one author having composed either of the two great poems that pass under Homer's name has been violently controverted in recent times, and a general scepticism has been diffused on this subject by the learning of Wolfe and Heyné. Those great men have had antagonists, it is true; but none that were worthy *Ἀντίβιον μαχέσασθαι ἐν αἰνῇ δημοτῇτι*, till our own countryman, Payne Knight,\* vindicated the Iliad and Odyssey from the imputation of having been patched into beauty and unity by a crowd of equivocal rhapsodists.

The old and ordinary opinion respecting Homer rests on the double argument, of the consent of antiquity, and of the harmonious design apparent in the Homeric poems themselves. On the latter grounds, a mind strongly susceptible of poetry may, possibly, build more assurance to itself, than it may be able to communicate to others. For the perception of harmonious grandeur, in a poem, is a matter of taste more than demonstration. And persons of the highest philological authority, in the question, may sometimes be the most dead to this species of evidence. Mere erudition will no more ensure the power of appreciating harmonious poetical design, than botanical skill will enable obtuse senses to enjoy the flavour of a fruit, or the smell of a flower.

The epics of Homer are said to have been first brought to the Peloponnesus, by Lycurgus. At the Panathenæan festivals,

\* Mr. Knight is so far a dissenter from the old opinion, that he conceives the Iliad and Odyssey to contain internal marks of separate authors; and he admits that both have many interpolations. But the admission of both of those two suppositions is a very different innovation on our accustomed ideas, from supposing such a work as the Iliad to have been a work of medley production and fortuitous design.

they were sung in disordered and detached parts, till, according to one account, Solon, according to another, Hipparchus, and according to a third, Pisistratus, ordered the rhapsodists, one succeeding another, to sing them in regular order. The words of Cicero, to which Professor Wolfe attaches so much importance, are, that "Pisistratus is said to have first disposed the books of Homer, which were formerly confused, into the order in which we now possess them." If this passage really established that the Athenian copy of Homer was the oldest in existence, it is very singular that it should have never been inquired after by the founders of the Alexandrian library. They sent to Sinope, to Massilia, and to the extremities of Asia and Europe, for other copies. They extorted from Athens, at an enormous price, the MSS. of her tragic poetry. But, for this imaginary first edition of Homer, not a demand was made, nor a coin offered. There is nothing however in Cicero's expression of *confusas antea* which either means or proves that the Iliad and Odyssey, though the rhapsodists might repeat them confusedly, came in incoherent scraps from the genius that produced them. Thucydides says nothing of Greece having owed any such obligation to the Pisistratidæ, as that of having first cast the Homeric fragments into one mighty mould. Aristotle praises Homer himself, and no one else, for the artful structure and disposition of parts in his epic poetry. Herodotus, a native of the country where Homer's poetry was first found, and who lived in the next age after the expulsion of the Pisistratidæ, never mentions the scattered rhapsodies of the Iliad and Odyssey, but describes them as poems anciently and absolutely entire. In seeking for better lights than these primitive authorities, learning only seems to be turning a telescope upon utter darkness, through which she can discern no more than the vulgar eye.

How long Homer's writings were preserved in a state of oral tradition, no one can pretend to determine. At the same time it is but fair to admit, whatever arguments may be drawn from the admission, that there is no appearance of the knowledge of writing in his works. At the making of treaties, a little wool was pulled from the slaughtered lamb, but it was not in those days that its skin was yet made into parchments for recording them. The metals were engraved, but not coined. The tomb of the warrior appears without an epitaph. Had the use of letters been familiar, Homer, who delights in describing processes of art, would certainly have sent an epistle from Ulysses to his spouse; and Minerva would have taken special care of its orthography and sealing.

Hence the possibility of one man having composed either the Iliad or Odyssey has been pronounced by some to be incredible.

But let us beware of deciding on this point by our own habits of memory. Our powers of recollection constantly lean on books, even at school, where we are best disciplined into remembering them. In after-life, we seek for general ideas in excursive reading. On the whole, the faculty of memory is, with us, like a servant ill trained, and accustomed to little confidence—awkward when put to the test, and apt to be treacherous when over-trusted. Yet astonishing powers of recollection are attested, even in ages acquainted with books. Xenophon\* records, that there were persons in his time who had the whole Iliad and Odyssey by heart. What the human memory can retain of another's composition, it might certainly recollect of its own; and this would be much more likely to be the case in the age of Homer than of Xenophon. Let us imagine all the circumstances of the age operating on such a being as the bard is described by Homer in the heroic times: his inspiration ascribed to the Gods; his calling held by men more honourable than even that of the soothsayer, and the averter of death and disease; his sole business in life to meditate, noon, night, and morning, on those strains that were to render him the favourite of kings and the idol of the people, and to hoard them in a mind undistracted by other pursuits, as the support of his ambition and existence. If we consider these circumstances, we shall hardly believe that a man of genius could be prevented from composing the Homeric works, in a period unacquainted with writing, from the necessary weakness of the human memory.

The supposition, that one genius could have composed them, and found an audience to remember their sequency, is at least as easily admissible, as that the Iliad should have been a medley composition of many poets. For inspiration is a solitary creative spirit, and it is not to knots and groups, or accidental fabricators, that she has ever intrusted those great conceptions, in poetry or painting, or in any of the fine arts, that have commanded the permanent homage of mankind.

The Trojan expedition appears to have had an influence on ancient Greece in many respects similar to that of the Crusades on modern Europe; and as the latter event supplied materials for the romancers, so the former must have given a grand impulse to the spirit of Greek heroic poetry. Dispersed as the strains of romance are over various languages, and fraught with the characteristics of different ages and countries, it is difficult to compare them closely with those of Homer. But it needs only a slight insight into both to be struck by the high superiority of the Greek imitations of life, in point of distinctness and an air

\* Xenoph. Symp. iii. 5.

of reality. It is true, that chivalry gave human character some noble peculiarities unknown to the antique time. Though the Hellenic chief might have as much cultivated brain under his helmet as the Crusader, and though he appears upon the whole to have been a more eloquent and sagacious being, yet the heart of the knight affected a degree of courtesy, love, honour, and devotion, to which his ancient prototype made no pretensions. The later ages of chivalry also furnished in her tilts and tournaments, and in the gorgeous cathedrals where her votaries were consecrated, more imposing subjects for description than any games, or sacrifices, or temples that are mentioned by Homer. Even the war-field of the Iliad is without a trumpet, or a standard, to heighten its "*pomp and circumstance*," which is the more remarkable because wind instruments are mentioned, though never as employed in animating troops. The heroic leader is extolled as "*good at the shout*;" and when Homer leads the Greeks into the Troade, he depends for martial effect on his spirited similes, and on the description of phalanxes blazing in armour, and marching in silence that was only broken by the voices of their chiefs and the sound of the earth under their tread.

Yet still Homer found in his heroic age a world by no means of desolate simplicity: on the contrary, its manners display the germs of multifarious civilization. Amidst all the turbulence and insecurity of life there is a mixture of peaceful as well as warlike pursuits. Commerce appears as well as agriculture. Ingenious arts that were not practised by the nobles, were nevertheless held in high estimation; and it is mentioned of a hero who falls in battle, that his father was renowned for his skill in ship-building. It matters not how imperfect the arts might be, to the fact of their mere existence having had a happy influence on the poetry of Homer.\* Infantine and rude as they are, they give relief to his scenes of heroic homicide—they remove his simplicity from savage monotony, and they point our associations agreeably to an interest in popular happiness and familiar life.

Whatever traits of moral or physical culture the poet found,

\* This subject puts me in mind of a letter with which Mr. Bowles did me the honour of publicly addressing me, in which he says, among other things, that Homer never mentions a bridge. But if *γεφύρα* means a bridge, Mr. B. will recollect an instance in a simile of the 5th Iliad.

———— ποταμῷ πληθοντι εἰκῶς,  
Χειμάρρῳ ὅστ' ὤκα ρέων ἐκέδασσε γεφύρας.—l. 87, 88.

When the book in which I dissented from Mr. Bowles's theory of criticism, comes to a second edition, I shall have a good deal to say to my reverend friend. I have not misrepresented him as he imagines. But I have no leisure to write pamphlets about him.



he evidently dwells on them with fondness; and where these are absent, his unsophisticated traits of the human heart, together with the antiquity of his pictures, gives them a charm that we should exchange with reluctance for the representations of a more intellectual state of society. Even the redundance of his diction and description seems so much a part of the overflowing fulness of his mind, that we should no more wish him to be succinct than we should desire to see the shores of the Mississippi trimmed into neatness.

The virtues of Greek heroism are rude in comparison with some of those which chivalry professed and even practised. But the high aspirations of chivalry had all some natural origin in the human breast; and a poet who knew man so well as Homer, and who found him raised above the torpor of barbarism, could not fail to exhibit all the elements, even of chivalrous virtue. Accordingly Hector's delicacy to Helen is the same which a Bayard or a Sidney would have shown in similar circumstances; and he reproves even his recreant brother with a generous lenity. His combat with Ajax is conducted with mutual magnanimity. We have no challenges, it is true, about the beauty of mistresses; and the word love, in our genuinely *romantic* meaning, does not meet us in Homer. Nevertheless, the very fathers of Troy speak with a gallant sensibility of Helen's beauty—the scenes of conjugal affection are superlatively beautiful, and the situation of women appears in the *Iliad* to be much more free and honourable than we afterwards find in the height of Attic refinement. In short, we meet in Homer's heroism with all the natural flowers of human virtue, whatever chivalrous cultivation might have afterwards added to their lustre and perfume.

But the effects of chivalry were by no means unmixed: it raised certain sentiments to a factitious magnitude at the expense of others, and its institutions tended, on the whole, to give a formal, hyperbolical, and monotonous cast to human character. Accordingly the personages of romantic fiction have little individuality; and when we have one accomplished knight errant, we may form a tolerable conception of the whole brotherhood. Their virtues are exaggerated, and require but a slight additional touch of exaggeration to convert them into caricature. Whereas Homer, in the ideal of poetry, retains the express image of man, and minutely observes his moral lineaments and proportions, whilst he enlarges heroism above the size of life. Amidst the boldest fables, all his men and women are natural, probable, and strongly discriminated individuals. They are varied as if by chance, yet all harmonizing with the spirit of the age, collectively represent its world of moral character.

Achilles, in the centre, is of the order of spirits that electrify and command mankind. His alarming and sensitive being is the soul of the Iliad, and his very absence and repose are the causes of its disastrous action. He is unquestionably ferocious, but his quarrel is just, he is wronged—high-minded—hating falsehood like the gates of hell—young, beautiful, and predestined to fall. Casual glimpses of his manners are also given, that interestingly soften our conception of him. He is the only hero of the Iliad who amuses himself with music and poetry. The deputies of the army find him in his tent playing on his lyre, and chanting heroic songs; and, though he knows their hateful errand, he receives them with a calm and manly benignity. Horace does him injustice when he calls him a disclaimer of laws\* and inexorable; for he melts into tears at the prostrate grey hairs of Priam, the father of the slayer of his friend, though he had lately withstood all the eloquence of Nestor.

It shows the security of Homer in his inspiration, to have introduced such an opponent to Achilles as Hector. But when he leads us to Troy, he makes us Trojans in our affections, and almost seems to become so himself. Prodigal in sympathy with the events and agents which he conjures up, his imagination as tenderly conceives the lamentations of Hecuba, and the heart-sick swoon of Andromache, as it makes itself impetuously congenial with the vengeance of Achilles. Like nature, he is fruitful in creating characters, and like her, impartial in distributing and intrusting virtues to contending parties. Conscious that Achilles could shine by his own light, he fears not to show us his image through tears for the fate of Hector. In delineating Hector by the eulogies of his weeping country and friends, the climax is exquisitely perfected by Helen. All others who had bewailed him, she says, were bound to him by reciprocal ties; but her's was the grief of gratitude for the undeserved and gratuitous kindness of his mighty heart. He had interposed when others had reproached her—he had soothed her when her tears flowed at their reproaches.

Æneas creates a less ardent, though still respectable interest; and it is increased by a hint, which is thrown out with an air of minute historical probability, that Priam was jealous of his greatness, and that his virtues had been partially thrown into the shade. What expression in every figure of this mighty tablet!—what diversity even between men incompetent to great actions; as between the abject coward and vulgar braggart Thersites, and the gay good-natured Paris, whose spirit, though

\* ————— inexorabilis, acer,  
Jura negat sibi nata, nocetque nocetur.



sunk in luxury, still shows some traces of his noble breed! The stout arm and heart of Ajax stand him in lieu of all piety, craft, or sensibility; whilst Sarpedon, bleeding in warfare not his own, spends his last generous breath in exhorting the brave to rally the battle. Homer is above all artificial antithesis in the painting of character; but in describing natures remotely different, he could not avoid exhibiting contrasts; and that which is visible between Achilles and Ulysses, is as perfect as heroic nature can afford.

The youthful Diomed is among the Greeks, next to Achilles, the apparent favourite of the poet:—all spirit and lustre, his valour burns like “*the unwearied fire that plays on his shield and crest.*”<sup>\*</sup> Like Achilles, he is insulted by Agamemnon, who charges him with cowardice on the eve of battle; but he is wise as well as warlike, and it is not till his actions have belied the imputation, that he retaliates upon his commander. When the Greeks have been worsted, and when Agamemnon proposes abandoning the siege, Diomed, the youngest of all the chiefs, rises in the council, and gives him a dignified rebuke. Agamemnon himself is not without the virtues of fraternal affection, and willingness to listen to able counsellors. He has also his day of distinction in the field. But his importance altogether is more royal than personal, and his faults are made conspicuous by his supremacy. Alternately presumptuous and despondent, he is the readiest to tax others with deficient courage, and the first himself to despair under public reverses. He is also unmerciful in victory. The cry of *ξάγρει Ἀτρεὺς υἱὸς* is addressed to him in vain, and he makes two of the most atrocious refusals of quarter that occur in the Iliad. It has been remarked, that Homer speaks as a friend to royal government; but still he describes it as too limited, or rather as too undefined, to be despotic; and the chiefs in the councils of the Iliad present us with a sort of Greek picture of Gothic feudalism. And if he shows respect for monarchy, he makes his kings no monopolists of virtue. In poetical justice, he seems to have thought it sufficient to give Agamemnon the diadem, and a few good qualities, as his share of importance in the poem, leaving brighter heroic endowments to chiefs subordinate in political power.

Amidst these forms which the Iliad exhibits in the bloom or strength of heroism, the aged characters are no less happily distinguished. Nestor looks back on a life of greatness and wisdom:—he has no rival in venerable years; his powers have

reached the last ripeness of experience, but they have also something of the mellow tint that precedes decay. He dwells on his own exploits with an egotism and fulness that could only be endured in the most ancient of men. Phœnix, the friend of Achilles, on the other hand, is also old, but his youth had been embittered by misery and vindictive passions; and when he comes to exhort the hero against excessive resentment, he confesses his early errors in a tone very different from the self complacency of Nestor.

Priam is neither very wise nor energetic; but his heart is warm with natural affections, and his woes and years sustain our reverence and solicitude. When the wail of the Trojans bursts from their walls, at the sight of Hector dragged in triumph by his conqueror,—when the frantic father implores his friends to let him go forth, and implore the pity of the destroyer, the struggle of his people to detain him, and the voice of his instinctive agony, surpass almost every thing in the pathos of poetry, and affect us more like an event passing before our eyes, than a scene of fictitious calamity. Never was the contrast of weakness and strength more fearful, than when he throws himself at the feet of Achilles, whilst his feeble perspicacity makes us tremble at every moment, lest he should light up the inflammable temper of Achilles, fluctuating between wrath and compassion. Yet, hallowed by paternal sorrow, age and weakness prevail. The old man accomplishes his point, and the terrific victor condescends to the delicacy of even veiling Hector's corpse from his view.

The mythology of the great poet, cannot be acquitted of undignified passages; but among these the most notoriously objectionable, viz. the allusion to the suspension and flogging of Juno, has been generally deemed an interpolation by the best judges. Traits of grandeur and beauty, however, are not wanting, even in his mythology; witness the meeting of the King and Queen of Heaven on the mountain, where the flowers are described as springing up spontaneously on the spot of their embrace. And taken in a general view, his Heaven is made more amusing by its anthropomorphism than it could have been rendered by purer religious ideas. His divinities are only immortal men and women surpassing mortals in power and beauty, but not the less interesting because they transfer the passions of humanity to Olympus. His heroes are their kindred, and glow with the tints of their celestial consanguinity. His ethereal and heroic natures thus approach in partial contact like the blending skies and mountains of a beautiful landscape, where the hues of Heaven and earth insensibly melt into each other.

## SOME FORGOTTEN CATHOLIC POETS.

" . . . Illacrimables  
Urgentur, ignotique longa  
Nocte carent quia vate sacro."

WHEN we speak of Catholic poets, three of the foremost names in English literature come up at once—Dryden, Pope, and Moore. The two latter are more eminent, perhaps, as poets than as Catholics, but of Dryden's sincerity and steadfastness in the change of faith which "moralized his song" and gave a masterpiece to English poetry there is, happily, no doubt. Many later names are familiar to the general reader as those of Catholics whose genius has lent lustre to our own epoch. Some, like Newman, Faber, De Vere, and Adelaide Procter, claim fellowship with the most famous and are known wherever English poetry is read. Others, like Caswall, Coventry Patmore, and D. F. MacCarthy, are favorites of a narrower circle. All are known as Catholic poets to many by no means intimate with their works. Even poor Clarence Mangan has not been denied his place and his crust of praise on the doorsteps of the "Victorian Era"—he was never a very importunate suppliant: no act of Parliament could have made that minstrel a "sturdy beggar"—and is scarcely yet forgotten, although he added to the (æsthetic) crime of being a Catholic and the weakness of being an Irishman the unpardonable sin of living and dying in utter poverty and wretchedness.

Our present business, however, is not with these or with any who, being dead, have friends and follow-

ers to sound their praises, or, living, whose books may still be read and admired, if only by themselves. We shall take leave to introduce the reader into an obscurer company, where he will yet, we are assured, find those who are not unworthy of his friendship and esteem. They themselves and their memories even are ghosts; but they will gladly take form and substance to receive our sympathetic greeting and unbosom themselves of their sorrows. Fate has pressed hardly on them; they have felt the "iniquity of oblivion"; forgetfulness has been for most of them their only mourner: upon their trembling little rushlight of glory that each fondly hoped was to be a beacon for eternity that sardonic jester, Time, has clapped his grim extinguisher and they are incontinently snuffed out. Posterity, their court of last appeal, is bribed to cast them, and their scanty heritage of immortality is parcelled out among a younger and greedier generation. Instead of the trophies and mausoleums they looked to so confidently, the monuments more lasting than brass, they are fain to put up with a broken urn in an antiquarian's cabinet, a half-obliterated headstone in Sexton Allibone's deserted graveyard.

We own to a weakness for neglected poets. The reigning favorite of that whimsical tyrant, Fame, ruffling in all the bravery of new editions and costly bindings, world-

ty-minded critics may cringe to and flatter; we shall seek him out when he is humbled and in disgrace, very likely out at elbows and banished to the Tomos of the book-stall or the Siberia of the auction-room. We are shy indeed of those great personages who throng the council-chambers of King Apollo, and are ill at ease in their society. A bowing acquaintance with them we crave at most, to brag of among our friends, and, for the rest, are much more at home with the little poets who cool their heels in the gracious sovereign's anteroom. These we can take to our bosoms and our fire-sides; but imagine having Dante every day to dinner, leaving hope at the door as he comes scowling in, or Milton for ever discoursing "man's first disobedience" over the tea and muffins! Don Juan's Commander were a more cheerful guest.

It is pleasant, we take it, to turn aside now and then from the crowded highway where these great folks air their splendors, and lose ourselves in the dewy woods where the lesser muses hide, tracing some slender by-path where few have strayed.—*secretum iter et fallentes semita vite*. The flowers that grow by the roadside may be more radiant or of rarer scent; but what delight to explore for ourselves the shy violet hidden from other eyes, to stumble by untrodden ways upon the freshness of secret springs, and perhaps of a sudden to emerge in the graveyard aforesaid, where the air is full of elegies more touching than Gray's, and our good sexton is at hand to wipe the dust from this or the other sunken tombstone of some world-famous bard and help us to decipher his meagre record. The tombstone is the folio containing his immortal works; it is heavier than most tombstones, and

his world-famous memory moulders quietly beneath it. Surely there is something pathetic in such a destiny; something which touches a human chord. We may pity the fate of many a forgotten poet whose poems we should not greatly care to read. With their keen self-consciousness, which is not vanity, and their sensitiveness to outward impressions, poets more than most men cling to that hollow semblance of earthly life beyond the grave, that mirage of true immortality, we call posthumous fame. More than most they dread and shrink from the callous indifference, the cynical disrespect, of the mighty *sans-culotte*, Death. To die is little; but to die and be forgotten, to vanish from the scene of one's daily walks and talks and countless cheerful activities, as utterly and as silently as a snowflake melts in the sea; to be blotted out of the book of life as carelessly as a schoolboy would sponge a cipher from his slate—this jars upon us, this makes us wince. From that fate, at least, the poet feels himself secure; he leaves behind him the Beloved Book. With that faithful henchman to guard it, the pale phantom of his fame cannot be jostled aside from the places that knew him by the hurrying, selfish crowds. It will remain, the better part of himself, "the heir of his invention," but kinder than most heirs, to jog the world's elbow from time to time and buy him a brief furlough from oblivion. Through that loyal interpreter he may still hold converse with his fellows, who might ill understand the speech of that remote, mysterious realm wherein he has been naturalized a citizen; he will keep up a certain shadowy correspondence with the cosy firesides, the merry gatherings, he has left that may serve to warm and cheer him

in the chilly company of ghosts; perhaps—who knows?—may even lend him dignity and consequence among that thin fraternity. He will not wholly have resigned his voice in mundane matters; his memory, as it were a spiritual shadow, will continue to fall across the familiar ways; he will have his portion still, a place reserved for him, in the bustling, merry world. Very likely at this stage of his reflections he will whisper to himself, *Non omnis moriar*; in his enthusiasm he may go further, and with gay, vain, prattling Herrick share immortality, as though it were a school-boy's plum-cake, among his friends. Hugging this smiling illusion, he resigns himself to the grave, and the daisies have not had time to bloom thereon before the Beloved Book, the loyal interpreter, the faithful henchman, the wonder-worker of his dream, is as dead and utterly forgotten as—well, let us say as the promises our friend the new Congressman made us when he expressed such friendly anxiety about our health just previous to the late election.

So utter, even ludicrous, a *bouleversement* of hopes so passionate—and there is nothing a poet longs for so passionately as remembrance after death, unless it be recognition in life—may touch the sourest cynic. It may be as Milton says in his proudly conscious way: *Si quid meremur, sana posteritas sciet*. But what comfort is it to our undeserving to know that a sane posterity is justified in forgetting it? Good poetry, like virtue, is its own reward. But the bad poet, outcast of gods and men, and of every bookseller who owns not and publishes a popular magazine; the Pariah of Parnassus, the Ishmael of letters, with every critic's hand against him,

haunted through life by the dim, appalling spectre of his own badness, helplessly prescient in lucid intervals of the quaintly cruel doom which is to consign him after death to the paper-mill, there to be made over—*heu! fides mutatosque deos!*—for the base uses of other bad poets, his rivals—if to this martyr we cannot give consolation, we surely need not grudge compassion.

The discerning reader may have gathered from these remarks that the bards we are about to usher back from endless night into his worshipful presence are not all of the first order, or indeed of any uniform order, of excellence. They are not all Miltons or Shaksperes: *si quid meremur* would be for some of them an idle boast, and their posterity can hardly be convicted of insanity for having sedulously let them be. But neither must we argue rashly from this neglect of them that they deserved to be neglected. Neglect was for a time the portion of the greatest names in English letters. Up to the middle of the last century it was practically the common lot of all the writers who came before the Restoration. Literary gentlemen, the wits of the coffee-house, the Aristarchuses of Dick's or Button's, knew about them in a vague way as a set of queer old fellows who wrote uncouth verses in an outlandish dialect about the time of Shakspeare and Milton. The more enterprising poets stole from them; but English literature as a living body knew them not. They were no longer members of the guild or made free of its mysteries; they were foreigners among their own people, speaking a strange tongue, shrewdly suspected of unwholesome dealings in such forbidden practices as fancy and imagination, and on the whole best ex-

cluded from the commonwealth of letters. Even Shakspeare and Milton were little more than names. To the patched and periwigged taste of Queen Anne's and the Georgian era they made no appeal; the critics of the quadrille-table and the tea-gardens, the "pretty fellows" of the Wells, voted them low and insipid. Milton was a wild fanatic with heterodox notions of regicide, who wrote a dull epic which the ingenious Mr. Addison saw fit to praise in his *Spectator* for a novelty, of course, though his papers upon it were certainly far less amusing than those devoted to Sir Roger and his widow or the diversions of the Amorous Club; while Shakspeare was a curious old playwright whom the great Mr. Pope stooped to admire with qualifications, and even to edit—with notes, and some of whose rude productions, notably *King Lear*, when polished and made presentable by the elegant Mr. Tate, were really not so bad, though of course not for a moment to be compared to such superlative flights of genius as *The Distressed Mother* or *The Mourning Bride*. Does anybody nowadays read the elegant Mr. Tate, King William's laureate of pious and immortal memory? Besides his labors in civilizing *King Lear* and his celebrated *Poems upon Tea*, perhaps also upon toast, a grateful country owed to him, in conjunction with Dr. Brady, its rescue from Sternhold and Hopkins, "arch-botchers of a psalm or prayer," of whom we read, with a subdued but mighty joy, that they

". . . had great qualms  
When they translated David's Psalms,"

as well they might. Yet, despite this notable achievement, Nahum (Nahum, O Phœbus! was his name) has long since ceased to fill the

speaking trumpet. But for his impertinences to the "poor despised" Lear he would be quite forgotten. He is a fly like many another preserved in Shakspeare's amber.

One reads with a sort of dumb rage of these essays of smirking mediocrity to "improve on" that colossal genius. It was Gulliver tricked out by the Liliputians. Tate was not the only 'prentice hand that tried its skill at "painting the lily." Cibber and Shadwell were industrious at it, and to this day many of us know Shakspeare's "refined gold" only as it comes to us electroplated from the Cibberian crucible. Lord Lansdowne prepared a *Few of Venice*, which was acted with a prologue by Mr. Bevill Higgins—another Phœbean title which the great trumpeter has unaccountably dropped. Mr. Higgins brings forward Shakspeare telling Dryden:

"These scenes in their rough native dress were mine,  
But now, improved, with nobler lustre shine;  
The first rude sketches Shakspeare's pencil drew,  
But all the shining master-strokes are new.  
This play, ye critics, shall your fury stand,  
Adorn'd and rescued by a faultless hand."

Here are two of the shining master-strokes:

"As who should say, I am, sir, *an oracle*";

"Still quiring to the *blue-eyed cherubim*!"

And this was Pope's "Granville the polite," the "Muses' glory and delight" of Young, who informs us, moreover—he had certainly a very pretty taste and boundless generosity in praising a person of quality—that, though long may we hope brave Talbot's blood will run in great descendants, Shakspeare has but one, And him my Lord (he begs will) permit him not to name, But in kind silence spare his rival's shame. The generous reserve is vain, however. Each reader will defeat his useless aim, And to him-

self great Agamemnon name. Great Agamemnon is Granville :

"Europe sheathed the sword  
When this great man was first saluted lord,"

apparently that he might give his whole time to filling Shakspeare with shining new master-strokes like those above.

All this sounds ridiculous enough. But even genius was bitten by the same tarantula. We all know how Johnson treated *Lycidas*. Dryden found the rhyme in Milton's juvenile poems "strained and forced" (this of *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*, for example!), and confessed that Shakspeare's diction was almost as difficult to him as Chaucer. How difficult Chaucer was much nearer his own time may be inferred from the leonine Latin version of the *Troilus and Cresside* which Francis Kinsaston, an Oxford scholar, published in 1635, with the avowed object of rescuing Chaucer "from the neglect to which his obsolete language had condemned him by rendering him generally intelligible." And Cartwright, "the florid and seraphicall preacher," approves his pious labor, telling him :

"'Tis to your happy cares we owe that we  
Read Chaucer now without a dictionary."

What a commentary on the educational system of the time that in England such English as this—

"This Troilus, as he was wont to guide  
His yonge knights, he lad hem up and doune  
In thilke large temple, on every side  
Beholding aie the ladies of the toune,"

should be less generally intelligible than such Latin as this :

"Hic Troilus pro more (ut solebat)  
Juveniles equites pone se sequentes  
Per fani spatia ampla perducebat  
Assidue urbis dominas intuentes."

But so it was, and so it was to be long after. In 1718 Bysshe, in his *Art of Poetry*, "passed by Spenser and the poets of his age, because

their language has become so obsolete that most readers of our age have no ear for them, and therefore Shakspeare is quoted so rarely in this collection." And Thomas War-ton says of Pope's obligations to Milton, "It is strange that Pope, by no means of a congenial spirit, should be the first who copied *Comus* or *Il Penseroso*. But Pope was a gleaner of the old English poets; and he was here pilfering from obsolete English poetry without the least fear or danger of being detected." Pope certainly was a proficient in his own "art of stealing wisely." "Who now reads Cowley?" he asks, and answers his own question in the lines he borrowed from him.

What an anomalous period in our literature was this!—polished, witty, brilliant to the highest degree, displaying in its own productions incomparable taste and art, yet so incapable, seemingly, of "tasting" the great writers who had gone before it! Fancy a time when people went about—people of cultivation, too—asking who was that fellow Shakspeare! To us he seems as real and as large a figure in his dim perspective as the largest and most alive that swaggers in the foreground of to-day. Do we not feel something weird and uncanny, something ghostly, on opening the *Retrospective Review* so late as 1825, and finding Robert Herrick gravely paraded as a new discovery? Fifty years ago that was by the dates; as we read it seems five hundred. The critic antedates by centuries his subject—like his own god Lyæus, "ever fresh and ever young"—and is infinitely older, quainter, more remote from us. Is it our turn next to be forgotten? Shall we not all be asking at our next Centennial if Tennyson ever lived, debating whether Master Far-

quhar was really the author of the poems attributed to Browning, finding Longfellow difficult and obscure, and wondering in our antiquarian societies if Thackeray was a religious symbol or something to eat? Shall we—but if we keep on in this wise, one thing plainly we shall not do, and that is get back to our neglected Catholic poets—now twice neglected. Let us leave our future to bury its own dead, and betake ourselves once more to the poetic past.

We have seen that our Catholic poets, if forgotten, were at least forgotten in good company; in the ample recognition which came at last to the latter they did not so fully share. In that Renaissance of our early literature which marked the close of the last century, and which, pioneered by Percy, Ritson, Wright, Nichols, Warton, Brydges, and others, restored to the Elizabethan poets, with Chaucer and Milton, their "comates in exile," a pre-eminence from which they will scarcely be dislodged, many of our particular friends came to the surface. But most of them did not long remain there, dropping quickly out of sight, either from intrinsic weight or the indifference of the literary fishers who had netted them. How far any such indifference may have been due to their faith we will not venture to say. We should be sorry to believe that the hateful spirit of religious bigotry had invaded the muse's peaceful realm, scaring nymph and faun from the sides of Helicon with strange and hideous clamor. For our own part, we like a poet none the worse for being a Protestant, though we may like him a trifle the better for being a Catholic. We have a vague notion that all good poets ought to be Catholics, and a secret persuasion

that some day they will be; that the Tennysons, the Holmeses, the Longfellows and Lowells and Brownings of the future will be gathered into the fold, and only the —s or the —s (the reader will kindly fill up these blank spaces with his pet poetical aversions) be left to raise the hymns of heterodoxy on the outside in melancholy and discordant chorus,

" Their lean and flashy songs  
Grating on scrannel pipes of wretched straw."

Awaiting that blissful time, however, we are content to enjoy the "music of Apollo's lute" as it comes to us, without inspecting too curiously the fingers that touch it, so long as they be clean. And we are willing to believe that if our Catholic poets have had less than their fair share of attention, it has been their misfortune or their fault, and not because of any sectarian cabal to crowd them from the thrones which may belong to them of right among "the inheritors of unfulfilled renown."

To tell the truth, indeed, such of them as we find prior to the time of Elizabeth have few claims on our regret. We count, of course, from the Reformation; when all poets were Catholics, there was nothing peculiarly distinctive in being a Catholic poet. *The Shyp of Folyes of the Worlde, translated out of Latin, Frenche and Doche into Englyshe tonge by Alexander Barclay, preste*, is too well known to come fairly into our category. But the *Shyp of Folyes* belongs, after all, at least as much to Sylvester Brandt as to Barclay, and the more original works of the good monk of Ely—his *Eglogues* (though these, too, were based on Mantuanus and Aeneas Sylvius, afterwards none). his *Figure of our Mother*



*Holy Church oppressed by the French King*—even those trenchant satires, in which he demolished Master Skelton, the heretical champion, are sufficiently forgotten to be his passport. Another of his translations, *The Castle of Labour*, from the French, may have suggested to Thomson his *Castle of Indolence*—to the latter bard a more congenial mansion.

The "mad, mery wit" which won for Heywood, the epigrammatist, the favor of Henry VIII. and his daughter Mary seems vapid enough to us. Perhaps it was like champagne, which must be drunk at once, and, being kept for a century or two, grows flat and insipid. *The Play called the four P's, being a new and merry Enterlude of a Palmer, Pardoner, Poticary, and Pedlar*, would scarcely run for a hundred nights on the metropolitan stage. His *Epigrams, six hundred in Number*, which were thought uproariously funny by his own generation, ours finds rather dismal reading. We somehow miss the snap of even that wonderful design, his *Dialogue containing in effect the number of al the Proverbes in the English tongue*, which all England was shaking its sides over long after Shakspeare had flung his rarest pearls at its feet. Heywood's great work is an allegory entitled, *The Spider and the Flie*, "wherein," says a polite contemporary, "he dealeth so profoundly and beyond all measure of skill that neither he himself that made it, neither any one that readeth it, can reach to the meaning thereof." It is a sort of religious parable, the flies representing the Catholics, and the spiders the Protestants, to whom enter presently, *dea ex machina*, Queen Mary with a broom. Heywood "was inflexibly attached to the Catholic cause," and when, the broom-wield-

er having gone to another sphere, the spiders got the ascendant, he betook himself to Mechlin, where he died in exile for conscience' sake. Therein Chaucer could have done no better.

Can we enroll Sir Thomas More among our tuneful company? Brave old Sir Thomas was a Catholic certainly—a Catholic of the Catholics—and he wrote poetry, too, or what passed for such. It is one of the many heinous charges brought against him by worthy Master Skelton in his *Pithie, Pleasaunt and Profitable Workes*—his going about

"With his poetry  
And his sophistry  
To mock and make a lie."

But if poetry were a crime, and no other had been laid to his charge, the good chancellor might have stood his trial freely on such evidence as is found in his works. His *Mery Jest, how a Sergeant would learn to play the Frere*, is thought by Ellis to have furnished the hint for Cowper's *John Gilpin*. *A Rufull Lamentation on the death of Queen Elizabeth*, Henry VIII.'s mother, has touches of pathos. The dying queen soliloquizes :

"Where are our castels now, where are our towers?  
Godely Rychemonde, sone art thou gone from me!  
At Westminster that costly worke of yours,\*  
Myne owne dere Lorde, now shall I never see!  
Almighty God vouchsafe to grant that ye  
For you and your children well may edify;  
My palace byldyd is, and lo! now here I ly."

These, however, were the pastimes of his early youth, and even so were greatly, and doubtless justly, esteemed in his own time for their purity and elegance of style. For this reason also they are freely quoted by Dr. Johnson in the preface to his dictionary. More's fame does not rest on these achievements,

\* Henry VII.'s chapel.

but on the greatness of mind which baffled the tyrant, and "the erudition which overthrew the fabric of false learning and civilized his country." If not a poet, he was better than a poet, a great and good man, and his memory not Catholics only, but all good men, must ever hold in affectionate reverence.

Surrey, the gallant and the ill-fated, exactly reverses our doubt about Sir Thomas. A poet beyond question, is he to be reckoned a Catholic? His father was, and his son would have been had he had the courage of his opinions. The former, imprisoned at the same time with Surrey, "though a strong Papist," says Lord Herbert, "pretended to ask for Sabellicus as the most vehement detector of the usurpations of the Bishop of Rome." And Surrey's sister, the Duchess of Richmond, who swore away his life, "inclined to the Protestants," says Walpole, "and hated her brother." We need not dwell upon the doubt, however, since Surrey is otherwise ruled out of our small society. A poet included in all the regular collections, called by his admirers the first of English classics, and by Pope accorded the final glory of being "the Granville (!) of a former age," can scarcely be held one of the neglected to whom alone our suffrages are due. There, too, is Nicholas Grimoald, also of dubious orthodoxy, though undoubted genius. Nicholas was Ridley's chaplain and suspected of being tainted with his patron's heresy, but cleared himself by a formal recantation. Let us trust it was sincere. Grimoald's verses are often of remarkable elegance, and to the "strange metre" or blank verse, which he adopted from Lord Surrey, he lent renewed grace and vigor.

"Right over stood in snow-white armour brave  
The Memphisite Zoroas, a cunning clerk,  
To whom the heavens lay open as his book,  
And in celestial bodies he could tell  
The moving, meeting, light, aspect, eclipse,  
And influence and constellations all."

The eighteenth century might own these lines, the product of the first half of the sixteenth.

Edward Parker, Lord Morley, was a "rigid Catholic" and a prodigious author. He lived to be near a hundred, and left at least as many volumes as he had years. Besides translations of countless Latin and Greek authors from Plutarch and Seneca to St. Thomas Aquinas and Erasmus, he wrote "several tragedies and comedies the very titles of which are lost," and "certain rhymes," says Bale with a sniff of disdain. All alike are "dark oblivion's prey," but history has preserved the important fact that "this lord having a quarrel for precedence with the Lord Dacre of Gillesland, he had his pretensions confirmed by Parliament." What a sermon on human ambition! Genius toils incessantly for a century or so, turning off tragedies and comedies, rhymes and commentaries, without number, to be its monument through all time, and presently along comes that uncivil master of ceremonies, that insufferable flunky, Fame, kicks these immortal works without ceremony into the dust-heap, and introduces Genius to posterity as the person who "had the quarrel for precedence with my Lord Dacre of Gillesland." No distinction here, you see; not even a decent observance of those pretensions which Parliament confirmed. Lord Dacre, who never wrote, perhaps never knew how to write, a line, has his name bawled as loudly to the company as the author of all these tragedies and comedies and rhymes. Poor Lord Morley! may he rest as

soundly as his books! His pre-tensions to oblivion, at least, no one is likely to dispute.

Another poet and scholar not less scurvily treated, and to whom we have somehow taken a wonderful fancy, was George Etheridge, a fellow of Oxford and Regius Professor of Greek there under Mary. Persecuted for Popery by Queen Elizabeth, he lost his university preferments, but "established a private seminary at Oxford for the instruction of Catholic youth in the classics, music, and logic." He also "practised physic with much reputation," greatly, no doubt, to the joy of his pupils. A friend of Leland, the antiquarian, his accomplishments were varied and his learning profound. "He was an able mathematician," says a contemporary, "and one of the most excellent vocal and instrumental musicians in England, but he chiefly delighted in the lute and lyre; a most elegant poet, and a most exact composer of English, Latin, Greek, and Hebrew verses, which he used to set to the harp with the greatest skill." Of all these elegant productions one only survives—a Greek encomium, we are sorry to say, on that royal reprobate, Henry VIII.; and the memory of this pious scholar of the sixteenth century has suffered the slight of being confounded with the graceless dramatist of the seventeenth.

A cockle-shell weathers the storm that wrecks a frigate, and a nursery rhyme has outlived Etheridge's poetry and Morley's erudition. If widespread renown be a test of merit, *The Merry Tales of the Madman of Gotham* must be a work of genius. "Scholars and gentlemen" *temp.* Henry VIII. "accounted it a book full of wit and mirth," and the scholars and babies of three

centuries later approve that judgment. The author of this famous poem was Dr. Andrew Borde, or Andreas Perforatus, as he preferred to call himself, "esteemed in his time a noted poet, a witty and ingenious person, and an excellent physician," serving in the latter capacity, it is said, to Henry VIII. He was the original of the stage Merry-andrew "going to fairs and the like, where he would gather a crowd, to whom he prescribed by humorous speeches couched in such language as caused mirth and wonderfully propagated his fame." He wrote, besides the *Merry Tales*, *The Mylner of Abington*, a satire called the *Introduction of Knowledge*, and various medical works giving curious details of the domestic life of the time.

Many others we might catalogue who were better churchmen than poets — William Forrest, Queen Mary's chaplain, whose gorgeously-illuminated MSS. show that he, at least, had a due appreciation of his *Sainted Griselde* and his *Blessed Joseph*; or Richard Stonyhurst, who, like Heywood, died in exile for his faith, and who merits immortality for having written probably the worst translation of Virgil ever achieved by mortal man. It was in the amazing hexameter of the time, that "foul, lumbering, boisterous, wallowing measure," as Nashe calls it, which represented to Sir Philip Sidney and his coterie the grace and melody of Virgil's line. The wits laughed it to death, and we read its epitaph in Hall's parody :

*"Manhood and Garboiles shall he chaunt with  
changed feet."*

On names like these, however, we have not space to dwell. Not even neglect can sanctify them. We are at the dawning of that glorious outburst of creative genius which made

the Elizabethan era a splendor to all times and lands, and worthier subjects await us.

At the outset we must prepare for something like a disappointment in the scanty list of Catholic poets which even this prolific period could furnish. Looking back on it, all England seems to have been furiously bent on making poetry enough to last it for all years to come. Englishmen, we know, in those days did other things—circumnavigated the globe once or twice, and conquered a continent or so—in the intervals of rhyming; but the wonder is how they found leisure for such trifles from the absorbing business of the hour. Poetry, in that electric century of song, appears to have been the Englishman's birth-right; Apollo possessed the nation. The judge scribbled odes upon the bench; the soldier turned a sonnet and a battery together; the sailor made a song as he brought his ship into action; the bishop preached indifferently in sermons and satires—it was hard at times to tell which; the office-seeker preferred his claims in rhyme, and his complaints were "married to immortal verse"—it is lucky our own age is more given to office-seeking than to poetry; the bricklayer dropped his trowel and was a mighty dramatist; the condemned, like André Chénier at a later day—"the ruling passion strong in death"—strung couplets on the very steps of the scaffold. Even princes were smitten with the general madness, and, catching something of the general inspiration, made verses which were no worse than a prince's verses ought to be, and were often better than their laws. Were we poet-haters like Carlyle, we should have ample food for disgust in exploring that fiddling age. At every step in the

most likely corners we stumble upon the inevitable rhymers.

In the Mermaid, where we drop in for a quiet cup of canary, and perhaps a glimpse of that rising dramatist, William Shakspeare, we find him bawling madrigals over his sack; we overhear him muttering of "hearts" and "darts" as we take our constitutional in Powle's Walk; the very boatman who wherries us across the Thames is a Water-Poet, as though poets were classified like rats, and will importune us before we land to buy one of his four-score volumes; like black care, Rhyme sits behind the horseman and climbs the brazen galley. We fly from him to the camp; and there is that terrible fellow, Walter Devereux, Earl of Essex, whom we heard of anon slaughtering "vulgar Irishry," men, women, and children, like so many rabbits—there is that martial hero, fresh from his last battue of unarmed peasants, simpering over the composition of "godly and virtuous hymns." We ship with Drake for a trip to the Azores "to do God's work," and incidentally to fill our pockets, perhaps, as somehow or other "God's work" usually did for that pious and lucky mariner. *Scandit æratas vitiosa naves*—the rogue Apollo is there before us. We have scarce got over our sea-sickness before our ingenuous skipper will be asking our opinion of the commendatory verses which "he hath writ," he explains—a fine blush mantling under his bronze—"for his very good friend, Sir Gervase Peckham's *Report of the Late Discoveries*." We peep over my Lord of Pembroke's shoulder as he sits writing in his cabinet—it is a liberty that by virtue of his privilege a well-bred chronicler may take. By his knit brows and preoccupied air it is some weighty state

paper he is drafting—a minute, perhaps, of her majesty's revenues from fines of popish recusants, and how the same may be increased.

"Dry those fair, those crystal eyes,"

the state paper begins, and it is a minute of the perfections of the Lady Christiana Bruce.

Even the queen's majesty, between hangings of priests and virginal coquettings with princely wooers, finds time for the making of royal "ditties passing sweet and harmonically." When next we seek her beauteous presence, worthy Master Puttenham will buttonhole us in the ante-chamber and launch out into loyal praises of her "learned, delicate, and noble muse." "Of any in our time that I know of," he asseverates, "she is the most excellent poet, easily surmounting all the rest that have written, before or since, for sense, sweetness, or subtility, be it in Ode, Elegie, Epigram, or any other kinde of Poeme, Heroick or Lyrick." Master Puttenham is known to be writing a book on the *Arte of Poesie*. We think as we listen to him of another Royal Poet singing yonder at Fotheringay behind prison-bars, whose strains sound sweeter to us, though we shall do well to hide our preference here—sweeter, but infinitely sad :

"O Domine Deus, speravi in te !  
O care mi Jesu, nunc libera me !  
In dura catena, in misera pœna, desidero te !  
Janguendo, gemendo, et genuflectendo,  
Adoro, imploro, ut liberes me !"

Liberty is the burden of this captive's song, and her royal sister lends a gracious ear to her prayer. The headsman is already sharpening his axe to break her fetters. And still another princely genius up there in Edinburgh is so busy with his Divine Sonnets, and his

*Rules and Cautelis* for the fashioning of the same, he has no time to observe that his mother is being led to death. But what is a mother's life to those imperishable works ?

"How, best of poets, dost thou laurel wear !"

roars lusty Ben Jonson, brimful of sack and loyalty.

"Thou best of poets more than man dost prove,"

echoes the faithful Stirling. Yet, strange as it may seem, we can never read these superhuman productions with any comfort. The Divine Sonnets fade, and instead we see the gloomy stage at Fotheringay, the hapless but heroic victim, the frowning earls, the gleaming axe, the fair head dabbled with gore. Let us turn to merely human geniuses.

In this time of inspiration, with all England, from prince to peasant, bursting into song and three-fourths Catholic, we find from Spenser to Cowley a scant dozen, or, counting Shakspeare, at most a baker's dozen, of Catholic poets worth naming. And Shakspeare, in spite of Charles Butler's ingenious theory and its spirited revival by Mr. George Wilkes, we can scarcely claim. That great poet's religious creed, like other important features of his life, must no doubt remain always matter of conjecture. If he was a Catholic, his creed was probably no more than a tradition, strong enough to keep his pages free from the pictures of dissolute monks and nuns in which most of his contemporary playwrights delighted, but far from the fervor which sent Southwell to the scaffold, or the sincerity which, in a milder age, made Sherburne welcome poverty and disgrace. Omitting Shakspeare, then, our muster-roll is but short. For this there were many reasons. In

those days there was other work for Catholics than verse-making; the church needed martyrs, not minstrels, and the blood-stained record of the English mission tells how intrepidly the need was met. Southwell and Campian are only two of a brilliant band almost equally gifted, equally heroic. The life they led promised little for polite letters. Hunted like wild beasts, in hourly danger of the most cruel and ignominious death; sleeping, when they slept, in hayricks or the open fields; studying, when they caught a breathing-spell for study, in caves and thickets—many of these noble youths have left behind them proofs of a genius which, under happier auspices, would have borne abundant fruit. Southwell's poems, composed in the intervals of thirteen rackings, reveal a spirit of uncommon force and beauty. Campian is known to have written at least one tragedy, *Nectar and Ambrosia*, performed at Vienna before the Emperor Rodolph. It must be remembered, too, that both of these dauntless missionaries were cut off in the very flower of their age, Southwell being thirty-two and Campian forty when executed. Francis Beaumont, cousin and namesake of the dramatist, was a Jesuit and a poet. So was Jasper Heywood, son of the epigrammatist. He translated several tragedies of Seneca, and is said by some to have been one of the one hundred and twenty-eight priests executed by the clement Elizabeth. He is one of Cibber's Poets. Ellis Heywood, his brother, also a Jesuit, though he left behind him a prose work in Italian, is not known to have written in verse. Of Crashaw, whose fortune it was to live at a time when the storm of persecution had spent its fiercest fury,

when Catholics were subject no longer to be murdered, but only to be robbed—of Crashaw, whose "power and opulence of invention" Coleridge has remarked, another critic has said that, with more taste and judgment, "he would have outstripped most of his contemporaries, even Cowley."

These were all priests. But outside of the priesthood Catholics found work in other directions which left little leisure for literary pursuits. Chidiock Titchbourne, whose talents and unhappy fate the elder Disraeli has feelingly commemorated, was one of "an association in London of young Catholic gentlemen of family who met at the house of Mr. Gilbert, in Fetter Lane, and took care of Jesuits." Thomas Habington, an associate of Titchbourne in this enterprise, and who, if not a poet himself, was at least the father of a poet, narrowly escaped hanging for concealing in his house the Jesuits Garnett and Oldcome, accused of complicity in the Gunpowder Plot. Dymoke, the champion of England, apparently the same who translated *Il Pastor Fido*, won the title to a more glorious championship by dying (1610) in the Tower, where he had been imprisoned for his resolute refusal to conform. Dr. Lodge, a most charming poet as well as an eminent physician, we find in "the list of popish recusants indicted at the sessions holden for London and Middlesex, February 15, 1604." It is of interest to note *en passant* that with Dr. Lodge was indicted for the same cause "Ambrose Rookwood, of the army." Twenty months later Ambrose Rookwood, of the army, expressed his opinion of this treatment by engaging in the Gunpowder Treason. At a later period we have Sir Edward

Sherburne, a scholar and poet of no mean pretensions, resigning offices of large emolument rather than betray his faith. Certainly, under the last of the Tudors and the first of the Stuarts a Catholic poet may be said to have cultivated his art under difficulties.

The obstacles in the way of Catholics, then and long after, not only for obtaining culture but the rudiments of learning, were indeed enormous. Classed by legislative enactment with "forgers, perjurers, and outlaws," they were denied education for themselves or their children, except at the cost of conscience or of ruinous penalties. Their liberty they held at twenty days' notice; their lives at a moment's purchase. At any hour of the day or night their houses were open to the invasion of ruffianly pursuivants, searching ostensibly for "Mass-books" and other "popish mummeries," but prone to confound recusant jewels or broad gold pieces with the relics of superstition; and for such robberies they had absolutely no redress. In the courts of justice they found not only no protection, but renewed oppression. To use a phrase often misused, they had really no rights which a conforming subject was bound to respect, and their freedom, their fortunes, nay, their lives, were at the mercy of the rapacity or the malice of their Protestant neighbors. Much of their time they spent in going to and from prison; they crowded the common jails in such multitudes that many new ones had to be opened for the sole accommodation of these hardened malefactors; and their estates were impoverished to pay for the privilege, not of going to their own church—that was denied them in any event—but of staying away from one

they could not conscientiously enter. Men so occupied doubtless found ample employment for their leisure without making acrostics to Elizabeth Regina or panegyrics on the "best of poets."

Yet even this untoward time and chilling air yielded blossoms of Catholic poetry which we need not disdain to gather. Some of the daintiest of them have been culled by careful gleaners like Headley and Ellis and Southey, and a stray flower here and there salutes us in the more tasteful modern collections, such as Mr. De Vere's *Selections*, Mr. Palgrave's *Golden Treasury*, or Mr. Stoddard's *Melodies and Madrigals*, the latter a gem among its kind. But the bulk of the Catholic poetry of this period is practically unknown. Massinger, luckier than any of his great rivals (for Shakspeare was above rivalry), still keeps the stage with a single comedy, *A New Way to pay Old Debts*. But Shirley, little his inferior in dramatic ability, is, in spite of Dyce's elegant edition, utterly neglected. He may be said to owe his rescue from oblivion to that one noble song in *The Contention of Achilles and Agamemnon*, "The Glories of our Blood and State"—a song which alone is worth a library of modern ballads, and which might be called truly Horatian but for a moral elevation which Horace never reached. And even this song, almost his sole slender hold on immortality, Shirley came near losing; for in a spurious compilation of Butler's posthumous works it is given to the author of *Hudibras*, and there entitled *A Thought upon Death upon hearing of the Murder of Charles I.*, though anything further from Butler's style can scarcely be imagined. Ben Jonson—if, in virtue

of his twelve years spent in the church and the period of his best work, he may be considered as a Catholic poet at all—"rare old Ben," in spite of his weighty thought, his pungent humor, his fertile fancy, remains among the authors who are widely talked of and little read. Lodge again, who may dispute with Bishop Hall the honor of being the earliest English satirist, and who, "though subject to a critic's marginal," gives evidence of a glow and richness of imagination not common even in that opulent time—Lodge has no literary existence except as one of the wistful shades that flit through the Hades of the cyclopædias. Sir William Davenant has from Southey the distinguished compliment that, avoiding equally the opposite faults of too artificial and too careless a style, he wrote in numbers which, for precision and clearness and felicity and strength, have never been surpassed. Yet who now reads *Gondibert*, or its notable preface, which inspired Dryden with the germ of dramatic criticism? Sir Edward Sherburne, whom Mr. Dyce calls "an accomplished versifier," whose translations may even now be read with pleasure, and whose learning was above the average of his learned time, is equally forgotten. Crashaw is remembered less for himself than as the friend of Cowley, whose monody on his death, in Johnson's opinion, has "beauties which common authors may justly think not only above their attainments, but above their ambition." Southwell we think of as the martyr rather than as the poet. The verses of Sir Aston Cokayn and his friend Sir Kenelm Digby are not, perhaps, of the sort which the world does not willingly let die; yet

the plays of the former are not without merit, especially *Frappolin creduto principe*, an adaptation of the same Italian original whence Shakspeare took the hint for his prologue to the *Taming of the Shrew*. His minor poems, too, if they have no other merit, throw some curious side lights on the literary history of the time. The life of Sir Kenelm Digby, "of whose acquaintance," says Dryden, "all his contemporaries seem to have been proud," was itself a poem, and certainly one more worthy of being told than that of many of the gentlemen whom Johnson's vigorous pen has thrust into uneasy and unnatural immortality.

"Sweet Constable, who takes the wond'ring ear  
And lays it up in willing prisonment,"

who was rated as the first sonneteer of his time, is as little known as the pure and pensive Habington, the only love-poet of the reign of Charles I. whose pages are without stain. The two last-named writers, however, we may expect to see more noticed, both having been lately reprinted—Constable's *Diana* by Pickering, and Habington's *Castara* being included in the admirable and wonderfully cheap series of English reprints edited by Mr. Edward Arber.

We had thought to give a few specimens of at least the more obscure of the writers last mentioned. But we have already overstepped our limits and must bring this ramble to an end. The reader who may be tempted for himself to loiter in these unfamiliar ways will meet with much to reward him. "Old-fashioned poetry, but choicely good" he will find in abundance:

" . . . rich in fit epithets,  
Blest in the lovely marriage of pure words,"



## THE SONG OF ROLAND.

CONCLUDED.

THE night flies away, and the white dawn appears. Charles, the majestic emperor, mounts his charger, and casts his eye over the army. "My lords barons," he says, "behold these dark defiles, these narrow gorges. To whom do you counsel me to give the command of the rear-guard?"

"To whom?" replies Ganelon. "To whom but to my son-in-law Roland? Is he not a baron of great valor?"

At these words the emperor looks at him, saying, "You are a very devil! What deadly rage has entered into you?"

Roland approaches; he has heard the words of Ganelon. "Sire father-in-law," he says, "what thanks do I not owe you for having asked for me the command of the rear-guard! Our emperor, be assured, shall lose nothing; neither steed nor palfrey, cart-horse nor sumpter-mule, shall be taken, or our swords shall make more than the price."

"I believe it well," rejoins Ganelon.

"Ah! son of an accursed race!" cries Roland, who can no longer contain his anger, "thou thoughtest that the glove would fall from my hands as it did from thine." Then,

turning to the emperor, he prays him to give into his hand the bow which he grasps with his own.

The emperor's countenance darkens; he hesitates to place his nephew in the rear-guard. But the Duke de Naymes says to him, "Give the bow to Count Roland; the rear-guard belongs to him of right, since none other could conduct it so well as he."

And the emperor gives Roland the bow, saying, "My fair nephew, know you what I desire? I would leave with you the half of my army. Take it, I pray you; it shall be for your safety."

"Nay," cries Roland, "I will have no such thing. God forbid that I should belie my race! Leave me twenty thousand valiant Frenchmen, and set out with all the rest. Pass at ease through the defiles, and, while I am alive, fear no man in the world."

Roland mounts his charger. He is joined by his faithful Oliver, then Gérer, then Berenger, and the aged Anséis, Gérard of Roussillon, and the Duke Gaifier. "I, too, will be there," says the Archbishop Turpin, "for I ought in duty to follow my chief."

"And I also," says Count Gauthier.

"Roland is my liege-lord, and I must not fail him."

The vanguard begins its march.

How lofty are these peaks! What sombre valleys! How black the rocks; the defiles how profound! The French, in these dark gorges, seem oppressed with sadness. The sound of their footsteps may be heard full fifteen leagues away.

When they draw near to their mother-country, within sight of the land of Gascony, they call to mind their fiefs and their possessions, their tender children and their noble wives. The tears start into their eyes—those of Charles most of all; for his heart is heavy at the thought that he has left Roland among the mountains of Spain.

He hides his face with his mantle. "What ails you, sire?" asks the Duke Naymes, riding by his side.

"Is there any need to ask?" he answers. "In the grief that I am in, how can I refrain from groaning? France will be undone by Ganelon. In a dream this night an angel has made this known to me. He broke my lance in my hands—he who caused me to give the rear-guard to Roland, leaving him in this ungentle land. Heavens! were I to lose Roland, I should never see his like again!"

Charles wept; and a hundred thousand Frenchmen, touched by his tears, shuddered as they thought upon Roland. Ganelon, the felon, has sold him for gold and silver, and shining stuffs; for horses, and camels, and lions.

King Marsilion has sent for all the barons of Spain: dukes, counts, and viscounts, emirs and sons of the senators. He assembles four thousand of them in three days.

The drums beat in Saragossa; the image of Mahomet is set on its highest tower; and there is no pagan

who does not feel himself inflamed at the sight. Then, behold, all the Saracens set forth, riding at double speed into the depths of these long valleys. By dint of haste, they have come in sight of the gonfalons of France and of the rear-guard of the twelve brave peers. By evening they lie in ambush in a wood of fir-trees on the sides of the rocks. Four hundred thousand men are hidden there, awaiting the return of the sun. O heavens! what woe! for the French knew naught of this.

The day appears. Now it is the question in the Saracen army who shall strike the first blow. The nephew of Marsilion caracoles before his uncle. "Fair my lord the king," he says, with a joyful countenance, "in severe and numerous combats I have served you so greatly that I ask as a reward the honor of conquering Roland."

Twenty others follow in turn to boast before Marsilion. One says: "At Roncevaux I am going to play the man. If I find Roland, all is over with him. What shame and sorrow for the French! Their emperor is so old that he is imbecile. He will not pass another day without weeping." "Never fear," says another. "Mahomet is stronger than S. Peter! I will meet Roland at Roncevaux; he cannot escape death. Look at my sword; I will measure it against his Durandal, and you will then soon hear which is the longest." "Come, sire," says a third, "come and see all these Frenchmen slain. We will take Charlemagne, and make a present of him to you, and will give you the lands of the rest. Before a year is over, we shall have fixed ourselves in the town of St. Denis."

While they thus excite each other to the combat, they contrive, behind the fir-wood, to put on their Saracen coats of mail, lace on their Saragossa

helmets, gird on their swords of Viennese steel, seize their shields and their Valencian lances, surmounted by white, blue, and scarlet gonfalons. They mount neither mules nor palfreys, but strong steeds, and ride in close ranks. The sun shines; the gold of their vestments sparkles and gleams; a thousand clarions begin to sound.

The French listen. "Sire companion," says Oliver, "we may soon have battle with the Saracens."

"God grant it!" replies Roland. "Let us think of our king. We ought to know how to suffer for our lord, bear heat and cold, let our skin be slashed, and risk our heads. Let every one be ready to strike hard blows. We must take heed to what sort of songs may be sung of us. You have the right, Christians, and the pagans the wrong. Never shall bad example be given you by me."

Oliver climbs a tall pine-tree, looks to the right in the wooded valley, and beholds the Saracen horde approaching. "Comrade," he cries to Roland, "what a din and tumult is there on the Spanish side! Heavens! how many white halberds and gleaming helmets! What a rough meeting for our French! Ganelon knew it—the felon! the traitor!"

"Peace, Oliver," answers Roland. "He is my father-in-law; speak not of him."

Oliver dismounts. "Lords barons," he says, "I have seen even now so great a multitude of these pagans that no man here below has ever beheld the like. We shall have a battle such as there has never been before. Ask God for courage!" And the French reply: "Woe to him that flees! To die for you, not one of us all will be found wanting."

"Roland, my comrade," says the prudent Oliver, "these pagans are a multitude, and we are very few.

Heed me, and sound your horn; the emperor will hear, and will lead back the army."

"Do you take me for a madman?" answers Roland. "Would you have me lose my honor in sweet France? Let Durandal do its work—strike its heavy blows, and steep itself in blood to the hilt; all these pagans are as good as dead, I warrant you!"

"Roland, my comrade, sound your *olifant*, that the emperor may hear and come to your aid."

"Heaven keep me from such cowardice! Count upon Durandal; you will see how it will slay the pagans."

"Roland, my comrade, sound your *olifant*, that the emperor may hear it and return."

"Please God, then, no!" replies Roland once more. "No man here below shall ever say I sounded my horn because of the pagans. Never shall like reproach be brought against my race!"

"What reproach? What would you have people say? These Saracens cover the valleys, the mountain, the high-lands, and the plains. I have just beheld it, this innumerable host; and we are but a feeble company."

"My courage grows at the thought," says Roland. "Neither God nor his angels will suffer it that by me our France shall lose her renown. Sire comrade, and my friend, speak no more to me thus. We will stand our ground. For us will be the blows; our emperor wills it. Among the soldiers he has confided to us there is not a single coward; he knows it. Our emperor loves us because we strike well. Strike, then, thou with thy lance, and I with my good sword Durandal—Charles' gift to me. If I die, he who gets it shall be able to say, this was a brave man's sword!"

At this moment, the Archbishop Turpin put spurs to his horse, gained an eminence, and, calling the French around him, said to them, "Lords barons, our emperor has left us here, and for him we ought to die well. Remember that you are Christians. The battle draws on; you see it. The Saracens are there. Call to mind your sins; cry God's mercy. I will absolve you for the health of your souls. If you die, you will all be martyrs, and will find good place in the heights of Paradise!" The French dismount from their horses, and kneel on the ground, while the archbishop blesses them on the part of God, and for their penance bids them strike hard blows. Absolved and rid of their sins, they rise and remount their horses.

Roland, in his shining armor, is beautiful to behold, mounted on his good charger, Vaillantif. The golden reins ring in his hand, and on the top of his lance, which he holds with its point to heaven, floats a white gonfalon. The brave knight advances with a clear and serene countenance, followed by his companion, and then by all these noble French, whose courage he makes strong. He casts his lofty glance upon the Saracens, and, gently turning his head to those about him, says, "March, my lords barons, without haste. These pagans are hastening to their destruction." While he speaks, the two armies approach, and are about to accost each other.

"No more words," cries Oliver. "You have not deigned to sound your *olifant*. There is nothing to expect from the emperor; nothing for which to reproach him. The brave one, he knows not a word of that which is befalling us; the fault is none of his. Now, my lords barons, hold firm, and for the love of God, I pray you, let us not fear

blows; let us know how to give and take. Above all, let us not forget the cry of Charlemagne." Whereupon the French all shouted, *Montjoie!* Whoso had heard them would never all his life lose the remembrance of that shout.

Then they advance—heavens! with what boldness. To be brief, the horsemen have charged. What better could they do?

The pagans do not draw back; the *mêlée* begins. They provoke each other by word and gesture. The nephew of Marsilion, with insult in his mouth, flies upon Roland. Roland with one stroke of his lance lays him dead at his feet. The king's brother, Falsaron, desires to revenge his nephew's death; but Oliver forestalls him by planting his lance in his body. A certain Corsablix, one of these barbarian kings, vomits forth slanders and bravadoes. Abp. Turpin hearing him, bears down upon him in full force, and with his lance stretches him dead upon the ground. Each time that a Saracen falls the French cry, *Montjoie!*—the shout of Charlemagne.

Defiances and combats succeed each other fast on every side; everywhere the French are the conquerors; there is not a pagan who is not overthrown. Roland advances, thrusting with his lance as long as there remains a fragment of its wood in his hand. But at the fifteenth stroke the lance breaks; then he draws his good sword Durandal, which carves and slices the Saracens right valiantly, so that the dead lie heaped around him. Blood flows in torrents around the spot, and over his horse and his arms. He perceives in the *mêlée* his faithful Oliver breaking with the but-end of his lance the skull of the pagan Fauseron. "Comrade," cries Roland, "what do you? Of what use is a stick in such a fight? Iron

and steel are what you need. Where is your Hauteclaire—your sword hasted with crystal and gold?"

"I cannot draw it," said the other. "I have to strike the blows so thick and fast, they give me too much to do."

Nevertheless, with knightly skill he snatches it from its scabbard, and holds it up to Roland, the next moment striking with it a pagan, who falls dead, and cutting also through his gold-enamelled saddle and his horse to the chine. "I hold you for my brother," cries Roland. "Such are the blows which our emperor loves so much." And on all sides they cry, *Montjoie!*

How the fight rages! What blows fall on every side! How many broken lances covered with blood! How many gonfalons torn to shreds! And, ah! how many brave Frenchmen there lose their youth! Never more will they see again their mothers, their wives, or their friends in France, who wait for them beyond the mountains!

During this time, Charles groans and laments: to what purpose? Can he succor them by weeping? Woe worth the day that Ganelon did him the sorry service of journeying to Saragossa! The traitor will pay the penalty; the scaffold awaits him. But death, meanwhile, spares not our French. The Saracens fall by thousands, and so, also, do our own; they fall, and of the best!

In France, at this very hour, arise tremendous storms. The winds are unchained, the thunder roars, the lightning glares; hail and rain fall in torrents, and the earth trembles. From S. Michael of Paris to Sens, from Besançon to the port of Wisant, not a place of shelter whose walls do not crack. At mid-day there is a black darkness, lit up only by the fire of the lightnings; there is

not a man who does not tremble; and some say that, with the end of the century, the end of the world is coming. They are mistaken; it is the great mourning for the death of Roland.

Marsilion, who until then had kept himself apart, has beheld from afar the slaughter of his men; he commands the horns and clarions to sound, and puts in motion the main body of his army.

When the French behold on every side fresh floods of the enemy let loose upon them, they look to see where is Roland, where is Oliver, where are the twelve peers? Every one would seek shelter behind them. The archbishop encourages them all. "For God's sake, barons, fly not! Better a thousand times die fighting! All is over with us. When this day closes, not one of us will be left in this world; but paradise, I promise you, is yours." At these words their ardor rekindles, and again they raise the cry, *Montjoie!*

But, see there Climorin, the Saracen who at Marsilion's palace embraced Ganelon and gave him his sword. He is mounted on a horse more swift than the swallow, and has even now driven his lance into the body of Angelier de Bordeaux. This is the first Frenchman of mark that has fallen in the *mêlée*, and quickly has Oliver avenged him; with one blow of his Hauteclaire the Saracen is struck down, and the demons bear away his ugly soul. Then this other pagan, Valdabron, strikes to the heart the noble Duke Sanche, who falls dead from the saddle. What grief for Roland! He rushes on Valdabron, dealing him a blow which cleaves his skull, in sight of the terrified pagans. In his turn, Abp. Turpin rolls in the dust the African Mancuidant, who has just slain Anséis. Roland overthrows and

kills the son of the King of Cappadocia; but what mischief has not this pagan done us before he died? Gérin and Gérer, his comrade, Berenger, Austore, and Guy de Saint Antoine, all died by his hand.

How thin our ranks are growing! The battle is stormy and terrible. Never saw you such heaps of dead, so many wounds, and so much blood flowing in streams on the green grass. Our men strike desperate blows. Four times they sustain the shock, but at the fifth they fall, saving sixty only, whom may God spare! for dearly they will sell their lives.

When Roland sees this disaster, "Dear comrade," he says to Oliver, "how many brave hearts lying on the ground! What grievous loss for our sweet France! Charles, our emperor, why are you not here? Oliver, my brother, what shall be done, and how shall we give him of our tidings?"

"There is no means," answers Oliver; "it is better to die than shamefully to flee.

"I will sound my *olifant*," says Roland. "Charles will hear it in the depths of the defiles, and, be assured, he will return."

"Ah! but what shame! And of your race, my friend, do you then think no more? When I spoke of this anon, nothing would you do, nor will you now, at least not by my counsel. Your arms are bleeding; you have not now the strength to sound it well."

"Sooth, but what hard blows I have been giving! Nevertheless, we have to do with too strong a force. I will blow my *olifant*, and Charles will hear."

"Nay, then, by no means shall you do this thing, and by my beard I swear it. Should I ever see again my noble sister, my dear Aude, never shall you be in her arms!"

"Wherefore this anger?" Roland asks.

"Comrade," the other answers, "you have lost us! Rashness is not courage. These French are dead through your imprudence. Had you believed me, the emperor would have been here, the battle would be gained, and we should have taken Marsilion, alive or dead. Roland your prowess has cost us this mishap. Charles, our great Charles, we never shall serve more."

The Archbishop Turpin hears the two friends, and runs to them, exclaiming, "For God's sake, let alone your quarrels! True, there is no longer time for you to sound your horn; but it is good, notwithstanding, that the emperor should return. Charles will avenge us, and these pagans shall not return into their Spain. Our French will find us here, dead and cut to pieces, but they will put us into coffins, and with tears and mourning carry us to be laid in the burial-grounds of our monasteries; at least, we shall not be devoured by dogs, or wolves, or wild boars."

"It is well spoken," answers Roland; and forthwith he puts the *olifant* to his lips, and blows with all the strength of his lungs. The sound penetrates and prolongs itself in the depths of these far-reaching valleys. Thirty long leagues away the echo is repeating itself still!

Charles hears it; the army hears it also. "They are giving battle to our people," cries the emperor. "Never does Roland sound his *olifant* but in the heart of a battle."

"A battle, indeed!" says Ganelon. "In another mouth one would have called it a lie! Know you not Roland? For a single hare he goes horning a whole day. Come, let us march on. Why should we delay? The lands of our France are still far away."

But Roland continues to blow his *olifant*. He makes such great efforts that the blood leaps from his mouth and from the veins of his forehead.

"This horn has a long breath," says the emperor; and the Duke de Naymes replies, "It is a brave man who blows it; there is battle around him. By my faith, he who has betrayed him so well seeks to deceive you likewise. Believe me; march to the succor of your noble nephew. Do you not hear him? Roland is at bay."

The emperor gives the signal. Before setting out, he causes Ganelon to be seized, abandoning the traitor to his scullions. Hair by hair they pull out his moustache and beard, striking him with stick and fist, and passing a chain round his neck, as they would round that of a bear, and then, for the extreme of ignominy, setting him on a beast of burden.

On a signal from the emperor, all the French have turned their horses' heads, and throw themselves eagerly back into the dark defiles and by the rapid streams. Charles rides on in haste. There is not one who, as he runs, does not sigh and say to his neighbor, "If we could only find Roland, and at least see him before he dies! How many blows have we not struck together!"

Alas! to what purpose are these vain efforts! They are too far off, and cannot reach him in time.

Yet Roland glances anxiously around him. On the heights, in the plain, he sees nothing but Frenchmen slain. The noble knight weeps and prays for them. "Lords barons, may God have you in his grace, and may he open to your souls the gate of his paradise, making them lie down upon its holy flowers! Better warriors than you I have never seen; you have served us so long, you have conquered for us so many

lands! O land of France! my so sweet country, behold, thou art widowed of many brave hearts! Barons of France, you died by my fault. I have not been able to save you or guard you; may God be your helper—God, who is always true! If the sword slay me not, yet shall I die of grief. Oliver, my brother, let us return to the fight."

Roland appears again in the *mêlée*. As the stag before the hounds, so do the pagans flee before Roland. Behold, however, Marsilion, coming forth as a warrior, and overthrowing on his way Gérard de Roussillon and other brave Frenchmen. "Perdition be your portion," cries Roland, "for thus striking down my comrades!" And with one back-stroke of Durandal he cuts off his hand, seizing at the same time the fair hair of Jurfalen, the king's son. At this sight the Saracens cry out, "Save us, Mahomet! Avenge us of these accursed ones: they will never give way. Let us flee! let us flee!" So saying, a hundred thousand of them took flight, nor is there fear that they will ever return.

But what avails it that Marsilion has fled? His uncle, Marganice, remains in the field with his black-visaged Ethiopians. He steals behind Oliver, and strikes him a mortal blow in the middle of the back. "There is one," he cries, "whose destruction avenges us for all we have lost!" Oliver, stricken to death, raises his arm, lets fall Hauteclaire on the head of Marganice, makes the diamonds sparkling on it fly around in shivers, and splits his head down to the teeth. "Accursed pagan," he says, "neither to thy wife nor to any lady of thy land shalt thou boast that thou hast slain me!" Then he calls Roland to his aid.

Roland sees Oliver livid and colorless, with the blood streaming down.

At this sight he feels himself fainting, and swoons upon his horse. Oliver perceives it not; he has lost so much blood that his eyes fail; he sees neither things far-off nor near. His aim, which goes on wishing to strike, raises Hauteclaire, and it is on the hemlet of Roland that the blow falls, cutting it through down to the nasal, but without touching his head. At this blow, Roland looks at him, and asks gently, "My comrade, did you purpose to do this? It is I, Roland, your dearest friend. I know not that you have defied me."

And Oliver answers, "I hear you; it is your voice, but I see you not at all. If I have struck you, pardon me, my friend!"

"You have done me no hurt, my brother," answers Roland, "and I forgive you here and before God." At these words they bend towards one another, and are separated during this tender adieu!

Roland cannot tear himself away from the body of his friend, stretched lifeless on the earth; he contemplates him, weeps over him, and aloud reminds him of so many days passed together in perfect friendship. Oliver being dead, what a burden to him is life!

During this time, without his having perceived it, all our French had perished, excepting only the archbishop and Gauthier. Wounded, but still standing, they call to Roland. He hears and joins them. The pagans cry out, "These are terrible men; let us take heed not to leave one of them alive." And from all sides they throw themselves upon them. Gauthier falls; Turpin has his helmet cloven, his hauberk torn, four wounds in his body, and his horse killed under him. Roland, thinking of the emperor, again seizes his *olifant*, but he can only draw from it a feeble and plaintive note.

Charles hears it notwithstanding. "Woe betide us!" he cries. "Roland, my dear nephew, we come too late! I know it by the sound of his horn. March! Sound clarions!" And all the clarions of the host sounded together. The noise reached the ears of the pagans. "Alas!" they say to each other, "it is Charles returning! It is the great emperor. O fatal day for us! All our chiefs are in the dust. If Roland lives, the war will begin again, and our Spain is lost to us. Never will he be vanquished by any man of flesh and blood. Let us not go near, but from afar off cast at him our darts." Thereupon they withdraw, and rain upon him, from a distance, darts and arrows, lances and spears. Roland's shield is pierced, his hauberk broken and unfastened; his body is untouched, but Vaillantif, wounded in twenty places, falls dead beneath his master. This blow given, all the pagans flee at full speed further into Spain.

Roland, without horse, is unable to follow the fugitives. He goes to the succor of the archbishop, unlaces his helmet, binds up his gaping wounds, presses him to his heart, and gently lays him on the grass. Then he says to him softly, "Shall we leave without prayers our companions who lie dead around us, and whom we loved so well? I will fetch their bodies, and bring them before you."

"Go," answers the archbishop, "we are masters of the field; go, and return again."

Roland leaves him, and advances alone into the field of carnage, seeking on the mountain, seeking in the valley. He finds them—his brave comrades and the Duke Sanche, the aged Anséis, and Gérard, and Berenger. One by one he brings them, laying them at the knees of the priest, who weeps while he



blessees them. But when it comes to the turn of Oliver; when Roland would carry the body of this dear comrade, closely pressed against his heart, his face grows pale, his strength forsakes him, and he falls fainting on the ground.

The archbishop at this sight feels himself seized with a deathlike grief. There is, in this valley of Roncevaux, a running stream; if only he could give some water to Roland! He seizes the *olifant*, and tries, with slow steps, to drag himself tremblingly along. But he is too feeble to advance. His strength fails, and he falls, with his face to the earth, in the pangs of death.

Roland revives, and sees the prostrate warrior. With his eyes raised to heaven, and with joined hands, he makes his confession to God, and prays him to open to the good soldier of Charlemagne the gate of his paradise. Then he approaches the bleeding body of the holy prelate, raises his beautiful white hands, and lays them cross-wise on his breast, bidding him a tender adieu.

But Roland in his turn now feels that the hand of death is upon him. He prays to God for his peers, supplicating him to call them to himself, and invokes the holy angel Gabriel. Taking in one hand the *olifant*, and Durandal in the other, he climbs an eminence looking towards Spain, and there, in the green corn, underneath a tree, he lets himself sink upon the ground.

Near at hand, behind a marble rock, a Saracen, lying in the midst of the corpses, his face stained with blood, the better to counterfeit death, was watching him. He sees him fall, and, suddenly springing up, he runs to him, crying out, "Conquered! the nephew of Charles! His sword is mine; I will carry it to

Arabia!" He tries to draw it, but Roland has felt something, opens his eyes, and says, "You are not one of our people, it seems to me;" and with a blow of his *olifant* lays him dead at his feet. "Miscreant," he says, "thou art very bold—some would say very mad—thus to lay hands on me. However, I have split my *olifant*; the gold and precious stones are shaken from it by the blow."

Little by little Roland finds that his sight is failing him. He raises himself on his feet, trying to support himself as best he may; but his countenance is colorless and livid. On a rock hard by he strikes ten blows with Durandal. He would fain break it, his valiant sword. What grief and mourning would it not be to leave it to the pagans! May this shame be spared to France! But the steel cuts into the rock, and does not break. Roland strikes anew upon a rock of sardonyx. Not the least flaw in the steel! He strikes again. The rock flies in pieces, but the steel resists. "Ah!" he cries, "Holy Mary help me! My Durandal, thou who didst so brightly gleam in this resplendent sun; thou, so beautiful and sacred, who wast given to me by Charles at the command of God himself; thou by whom I have conquered Brittany and Normandy, Maine and Poitou, Aquitaine and Romagna, Flanders, Bavaria, Germany, Poland, Constantinople, Saxony, Iceland, and England, long hast thou been in the hands of a valiant man; shalt thou fall now into a coward's power? Ah! sacred Durandal, in thy golden guard how many precious relics are enshrined!—a tooth of S. Peter, the blood of S. Basil, some hair of S. Denis, a portion of Our Lady's robe—and shall ever any pagan possess thee? A brave man and a Christian has alone the right to use thee."

Even as he utters these words,

death is stealing over him, until it reaches his heart. He stretches himself at length upon the green grass, laying under him his sword and his dear *olifant*; then, turning his face towards the Saracens, that Charles and his men should say, on finding him thus, that he died victorious, he smites on his breast, and cries to God for mercy. The memory of many things then comes back to him—the memory of so many brave fights; of his sweet country; of the people of his lineage; of Charles, his lord, who nourished him; and then his thoughts turn also to himself: “My God, our true Father, who never canst deceive, who didst bring Lazarus back from the dead, and Daniel from the teeth of the lions, save my soul! Snatch it from the peril of the sins which I have committed during my life!” And so saying, with his head supported on his arm, with his right hand he reaches out his gauntlet towards God. S. Gabriel takes it, and God sends his angel cherubim and S. Michael, called “*du Péril*.” By them and by Gabriel the soul of the count is borne into paradise.

Charlemagne has returned into this valley of Roncevaux. Not a rood, not an inch of earth, which is not covered by a corpse. With a loud voice Charles calls the name of his nephew; he calls the archbishop, and Gérin, and Berenger, and the Duke Sanche, and Angélier, and all his peers. To what purpose? There are none to answer. “Wherefore was I not in this fight?” he cries, tearing his long beard and fainting with grief; and the whole army laments with him. These weep for their sons, those for their brothers, their nephews, their friends, their lords.

In the midst of all this mourning, the Duke Naymes, a sagacious man, approaches the emperor. “Look in

front,” he says. “See these dusty roads. It is the pagan horde in flight. To horse! We must be avenged!”

Charles, before setting forth, commands four barons and a thousand knights to guard the field of battle. “Leave the dead there as they are,” he says. “Keep away the wild beasts, and let no man touch them neither squires nor varlets, until the hour, please God, of our return.” Then he bade them sound the charge, and pursued the Saracens.

The sun is low in the heavens; the night is near, and the pagans are on the point of escaping in the evening shadows; but an angel descends from heaven. “March,” he says to Charles. “Continue marching; the light shall not fail you.”

And the sun stays in the sky. The pagans flee, but the French overtake and slay them. In the swift-flowing Ebro the fugitives are drowned. Charles dismounts from his charger, and prostrates himself, giving thanks to God. When he rises, the sun is set. It is too late to return to Roncevaux; the army is exhausted with fatigue. Charles, with a mourning heart, weeps for Roland and his companions until he sinks to sleep. All his warriors sleep also, lying on the ground; and even the horses cannot remain standing. Those which want to feed graze as they lie upon the fresh grass.

In the night, Charles, guarded by his holy angel, who watches by his side, sees the future in a vision; he sees the rude combat in which shortly he will need to engage.

During this time, Marsilion, exhausted, mutilated, has managed to reach Saragossa. The queen utters a cry at the sight of her husband, cursing the evil gods who have betrayed him. One hope alone remains. The old Baligant, Emir of

Babylon, will not leave them without succor. He will come to avenge them. Long ago Marsilion sent letters to him; but Babylon is very far away, and the delay is great.

The emir, on receiving the letters, sends for the governors of his forty kingdoms; he causes galleys to be equipped and assembled in his port of Alexandria, and, when the month of May arrives, on the first day of summer he launches them into the sea.

This fleet of the enemy is immense; and how obedient to the sail, to the oar, to the helm! At the top of these masts and lofty yards how many fires are lighted! The waves glitter afar off in the darkness of the night, and, as they draw near the shores of Spain, the whole of the coast is illuminated by them. The news soon flies to Saragossa.

Marsilion, in his distress, resigns himself to do homage for Spain to the Emir Baligant. With his left hand, which alone remains to him, he presents his glove, saying, "Prince Emir, I place all my possessions in your hands; defend them, and, avenge me." The emir receives his glove, and engages to bring him the head of the old Charles; then he throws himself on his horse, as he cries out to the Saracens, "Come, let us march; or the French will escape us."

At daybreak Charles sets out for Roncevaux. As they draw near, he says to those about him, "Slacken your pace somewhat, my lords; I would go on before alone to seek my nephew. I remember that, on a certain festival at Aix, he said that, should it be his hap to die in a foreign land, his body would be found in front of his men and of his peers, with his face turned towards the land of the enemy, in token that he died a conqueror—brave heart!" So

saying, he advances alone, and mounts the hill. He recognizes on three blocks of rock the strokes of Durandal, and on the grass hard by the body of his nephew. "Friend Roland," he cries out in extreme anguish, as he raises the corpse with his own hands,—“friend Roland, may God place thy soul among the flowers of his paradise, in the midst of his glorious saints! Alas! what hast thou come to do in Spain! Not a day will there be henceforth in which I shall not weep for thee. Relations still I have, but yet not one like thee! Roland, my friend, I return to France; and when I shall be in my palace at Laon, people will come to me from every quarter, saying, Where is the captain? And I shall make answer, He is dead in Spain! My nephew is dead, by whom I gained so many lands. And now, who shall command my armies? Who shall sustain my empire? France, my sweet country, they who have caused his death have destroyed thee!"

When he had thus given free course to his grief, his barons requested that the last duties should be performed for their companions. They collect the dead, and burn sweet perfumes around them; then are they blessed and incensed, and buried with great pomp, excepting Roland, Oliver, and Abp. Turpin, whose bodies are laid apart to be carried into France.

They were preparing for departure when in the distance appeared the Saracen vanguard. The emperor tears himself away from his grief, turns his fiery glance upon his people, and cries aloud with his strong and clear voice, "Barons and Frenchmen, to horse and to arms!"

The army is forthwith put in readiness for the combat. Charles disposes the order of battle. He forms

ten cohorts, giving to each a brave and skilful chief, and placing himself at the head. By his side Geoffrey of Anjou bears the oriflamme, and Guinevant the *olifant*.

Charles alights and prostrates himself, with an ardent prayer, before God, then mounts his horse, seizes his spear and shield, and with a serene countenance throws himself forward. The clarions sound, but above the clarions there rings the clear note of the *olifant*. The soldiers weep as they hear it, thinking upon Roland.

The emir, on his part, has passed his soldiers in review. He also disposes his army in cohorts, of which there are thirty, as powerful as they are brave; then calling on Mahomet, and displaying his standard, he rushes with mad pride to meet the French.

Terrible is the shock. On both sides the blood flows in streams. The fight and slaughter continue without ceasing until the day closes, and then, in the twilight, Charles and the emir encounter each other. They fight so fiercely that soon the girths of their horses break, the saddles turn round, and both find themselves on the ground. Full of rage, they draw their swords, and the deadly combat begins anew between them.

Charles is well-nigh spent. Stunned by a blow which has cloven his helmet, he staggers, and is on the point of falling; but he hears passing by his ear the holy voice of the angel Gabriel, who cries out to him, "Great king, what doest thou?" At this voice, his vigor returns, and the emir falls beneath the sword of France.

The pagan host flees; our French pursue them into Saragossa; the town is taken, and King Marsilion dies of despair. The conquerors make war against the false gods, and

with great blows of their battle-axes break the idols in pieces. They baptize more than a hundred thousand Saracens, and those who resist they hang or burn, except the Queen Bramimonde, who is to be taken as a captive into France, Charles desiring to convert her by gentle means.

Vengeance is satisfied. They put a garrison into the town, and return to France. In passing through Bordeaux, Charles places upon the altar of S. Severin his nephew's *olifant*; there pilgrims may see it even to this day. Then in great barks they traverse the Gironde, and in S. Romain-de-Blaye they bury the noble Roland, the faithful Oliver, and the brave archbishop.

Charles will not again halt on his way, nor take any repose, until he reaches his great city of Aix. Behold him arrived thither. He sends messengers through all his kingdoms and provinces, commanding the presence of the peers of his court of justice to take proceedings against Ganelon.

On entering his palace, he sees coming to him the young and gentle lady, the fair Aude. "Where," she asks, "is Roland—Roland the Captain, who promised to take me for his wife?" Charles, upon hearing these words, feels his deadly grief awaken, and weeps burning tears. "My sister and dear friend, he of whom you speak is now no more! I will give you in his place a spouse worthy of you—Louis, my son, who will inherit all my kingdoms; more I cannot say."

"These are strange words," she answers; "God forbid, and the angels and saints likewise, that, Roland being dead, Aude should live!" So saying, she grew pale, and, falling at the feet of Charlemagne, she died. God show to her his mercy!

The emperor will not believe but

that she has fainted: he takes her hands, lifts her up; but alas, her head falls down upon her shoulder; her death is only too true. Four countesses are commanded to watch by her all the night, and to cause her to be nobly buried in a convent of nuns.

While they are weeping for the fair Aude, and Charlemagne renders to her the last honors, Ganelon, beaten with rods and laden with chains, awaits his sentence.

The peers are assembled. Ganelon appears before them, and defends himself with subtlety. "I am avenged," he says, "but I have betrayed no one." The judges look at each other, and are inclined to be lenient. "Sire," they say to the emperor, "let him live; he is a good nobleman. His death will not restore to you Roland, your nephew, whom we shall never see more." And Charles exclaims: "You all betray me!"

Upon this, one of them, Thierry, brother to Geoffrey of Anjou, says to the emperor: "Sire, be not disquieted; I condemn Ganelon. I say that he is a perjurer and a traitor, and I condemn him to death. If he has any kin who dares to say that I lie, I have this sword wherewith to answer him."

Forthwith Pinabel, the friend of Ganelon, brave, alert, vigorous, accepts the challenge. At the gates of Aix, in the meadow, the two champions, well-confessed, well-absolved and blessed, their Mass heard, and their swords drawn, prepare themselves for the combat. God only knows how it will end.

Pinabel is vanquished, and all the

barons bow before the decision of God. All say to the emperor, "He ought to die."

Ganelon dies the death of a traitor—he is quartered.

Then the emperor assembles his bishops. "In my house," he says to them, "a noble captive has learnt so much by sermons and examples that she desires to believe in God. Let her be baptized; it is the Queen of Spain." They baptize her, therefore, under the name of Julienne. She has become a Christian from the depths of her heart.

The day departs; night covers the earth. The emperor sleeps in his vaulted chamber. The angel known to Charles, S. Gabriel, descends to his bedside, and says to him on the part of God: "To the city which the pagans are besieging, Charles, it is needful that thou march. The Christians cry aloud for thee."

"God!" cries the king, "how painful is my life." And, weeping, he tears his long white beard.

Here ends the song which Turoldus has sung.

We will conclude, as we began, with the words of the original, giving the last stanza of the poem (ccxcvi)

"Quant l'emperère ad faite sa justise,  
 E esclargie est sue grant ire,  
 En Bramidonie (Bramimonde) ad chrestientet  
 mise,  
 Passet li jurz, la nuit est ascrie,  
 Culceez s'est li rei en sa cambre voltice.  
 Saint Gabriel de part Deu li vint dire,  
 'Charles, semun les oz de tun empire,  
 Par force iras en tere de Bire;  
 Reis Vivien si sucuras en Imphe  
 A la citez que paien unt asize,  
 Li chrestien te recleiment e crient.'  
 Li emperère n'i volsist aler mie:  
 'Deus!' dist li reis, 'si penuse est ma vie!  
 Pluret des oilz, sa barbe blanche turet.'  
 —Ci falt la geste que Turoldus declinet.

A O I.